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Contemporary Holloware

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4 Editorial

6 Contemporary Holloware:
The Risks Are Great, the Stakes Are High *John Cogswell*

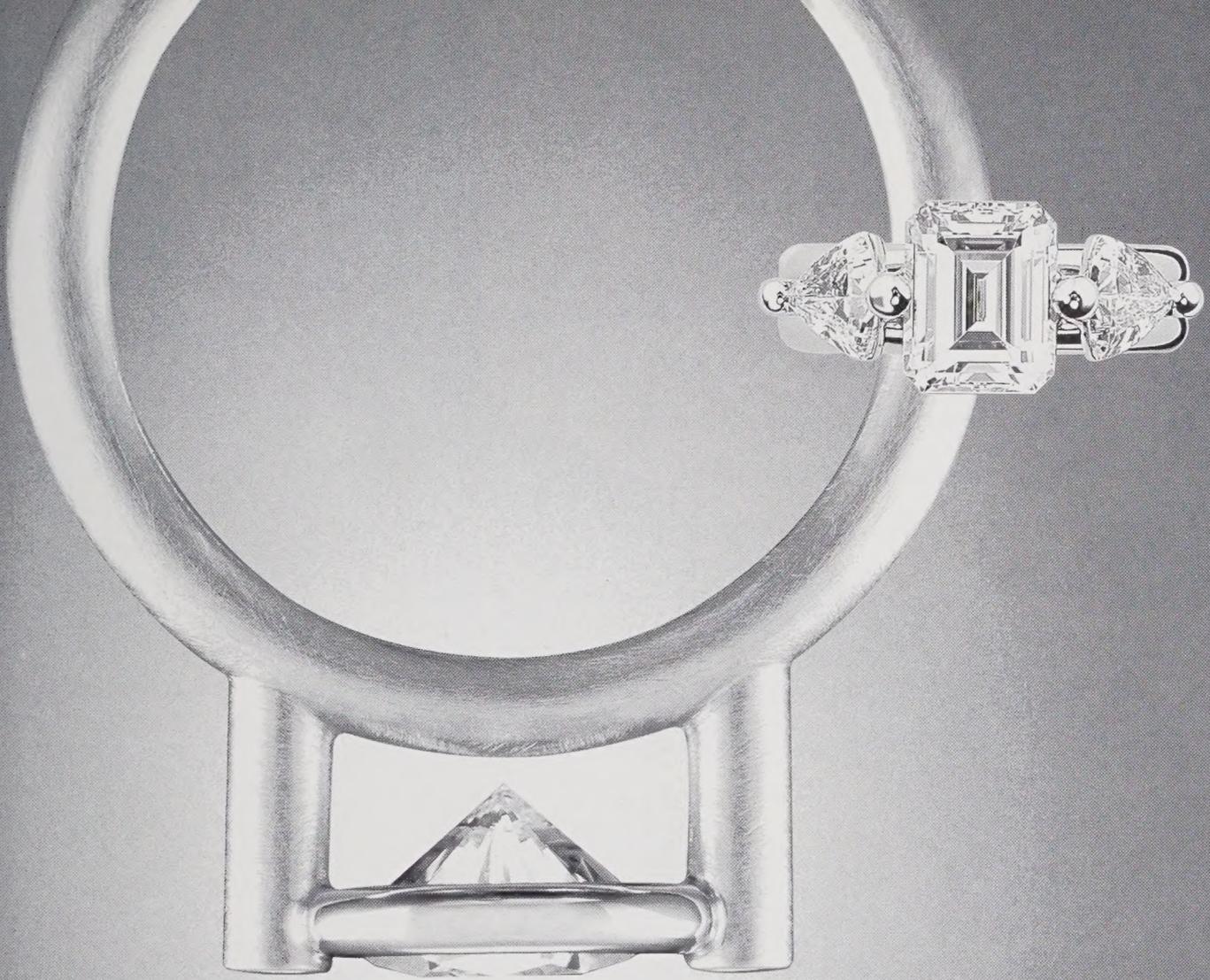
8 Thickening the Edge:
Contemporary Holloware in an Age of Pluralism *Lisa Gralnick*

EXHIBITION IN PRINT

METALSMITH VOL 21 NUMBER 4

15 James A. Curtis
16 Valentin Yotkov
17 Chunghi Choo
18 Lois Etherington Betteridge
19 Bernard Bernstein
20 Charles A. Crowley
21 Jack da Silva
22 Fred Fenster
23 Richard Mafong
24 John C. Marshall
25 Kurt J. Matzdorf
26 Billie Jean Theide
27 Catherine Grisez
28 Linda Darty
29 Harlan W. Butt
30 Komelia Hongja Okim
31 Sarah Perkins
32 Patricia A. Nelson
33 Jon Michael Route
34 June Schwarcz
35 Helen Shirk
36 Albion Smith
37 Richard L. Stone
38 Linda Threadgill
39 Susan Elizabeth Wood
40 Marilyn da Silva
41 Robin Kraft
42 Richard Mawdsley
43 Robly A. Glover
44 Suzanne Pugh
45 Andrew S. Macdonald
46 Daniel Wroblewski
47 Dennis R. Nahabetian
48 Tom Odell
49 Cappy Counard Wolf
50 Evan H. Larson
51 Leonard Urso
52 Felicia Szorad
53 Miel Margarita Paredes
54 Myra Mimlitsch-Gray

cover
Harlan W. Butt
Earth Beneath Our Feet: Incense Burner #2, 1999
enamel, silver, copper
8 x 6 x 6"
Photo: R. H. Hensleigh
Collection Roger Ford



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from the editor

SUZANNE RAMLJAK

One of the advantages of working within the metals field is that it encompasses so many types of different work, from flatware to furniture, goblets to gates, intimately scaled jewelry to large-scale architectural projects. This year's issue of *Exhibition in Print* focuses on the diversity of work being created within holloware, loosely defined by curator John Cogswell as "any volumetric, hand-fabricated, nonjewelry metal object." Cogswell and co-curator Lisa Gralnick set out to showcase the vitality and richness within this genre of metals, and their selection succeeds admirably in demonstrating the strength of this metalsmithing sector.

In light of the significant and varied objects presented on these pages, the term "holloware" seems especially inept at capturing the nature of the works being produced under this heading. On a purely formal level, many of these objects are not hollow in the strict sense of the term in that they are not "vessels with significant depth and volume." More important, the works featured here are not hollow in the metaphorical sense; counter to the word's definition, they are not "lacking in real value, sincerity, or substance." To the contrary, in her essay for this issue Gralnick demonstrates that many of the objects are deeply invested with meaning, whether it be liturgical symbolism, personal narrative, social commentary, or an investigation of the traditions of craft itself.

Although these works may defy the dictionary definition of "hollow," they certainly comply with our expectations for engaging, well-conceived objects. Rather than the term "holloware," perhaps it would be more appropriate to refer to these works as "fullware" or "ampleware," given that they are richly endowed with content and value. Regardless of what they are called, there is no denying the satisfaction that these objects can provide and the innovation apparent in this realm of metal art. We owe thanks to the curators for assembling such a sterling "exhibition," and to the artists for creating such remarkable work. ■

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Editor Suzanne Ramljak
Graphic Design Catherine Jacobi, Ted Studios, Inc.
Copy Editor Michael Goodman
Production Coordinator Dana Singer

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SNAG/Metalsmith Business Office
710 East Ogden Avenue, Suite 600
Naperville, Illinois 60563-8603
(630) 579-3272, FAX (630) 369-2488
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Executive Director
Dana Singer
2275 Amigo Drive
Missoula, Montana 59808
(406) 728 -5248 FAX (406) 728-2729
DSinger@SNAGmetalsmith.org

Advertising
Jean Azzato
5 East 22nd Street, Suite 23L
New York, NY 10010-5329
(212) 460-9224 FAX (212) 460-0078
metalsmithads@aol.com

Editorial Materials
Suzanne Ramljak
10 Plaza Street #12C
Brooklyn, New York 11238
(718) 636-6030 FAX (718) 636-4642
metalsmitheditor@aol.com

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Contemporary Holloware: The Risks Are Great, the Stakes Are High

John Cogswell

When Lisa Gralnick and I initially undertook the task of curating this year's *Exhibition in Print*, we decided to focus on contemporary holloware, in large part because of its relatively low profile within the metalworking community. Our primary goal was to feature work that exemplified the highest standards of quality and originality, and that reflected the vast range of objects currently being produced, from abstract and conceptual to utilitarian and practical, from ritualistic to domestic, from ceremonial pieces to mantelpiece ornaments. We chose a combined invitational-juried format, which we felt would allow us to showcase the work of relative newcomers, while also paying homage to those well-known educators and studio artists instrumental in establishing metalsmithing in North America. Although we made every effort to be as objective as possible in our selection, the process was, inevitably, weighted by the quality of the photographic images we received. However, we also

carefully considered the written and other submitted materials, looking for evidence of originality, artistic integrity, stylistic development, and commitment to the field.

Three-dimensional metalsmiths who create holloware (which, for our purposes, generally includes any volumetric, hand-fabricated, nonjewelry metal objects) as a primary studio activity comprise a relatively small proportion of the overall fine metalsmithing community in North America. For example, the Society of American Silversmiths (SAS) currently lists approximately seventy practicing artisan members, with a total membership of less than two hundred fifty, while, by contrast, the membership of the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG), predominantly jewelers, exceeds twenty-eight hundred. This paucity of dedicated practitioners, the collectively smaller body of work that they produce, and the less "public" nature of the objects they create contribute to holloware's under-representation in galleries, exhibitions, collections, and crafts media. Diminished visibility has, in turn, engendered a lack of awareness and appreciation of the scope of work being produced today, both within the fine metalsmithing community itself, and in the purview of the general public. Whether cause or consequence, the bottom line is the same: holloware has not enjoyed widespread acceptance or marketability in North America. It has never received the same level of financial patronage and support as jewelry, nor has it ever been embraced and supported by a broad audience.

Fine craft has not become an essential part of everyday life in our culture, as it has in many other societies around the world. We may admire it, collect it, display it in museums, decorate with it, but we don't really use it in our day-to-day lives. Functional crafts have largely been replaced in our homes by their commercially manufactured counterparts—mass-produced, readily available, cheaper to buy, and easier to use and maintain. For lack of demand, a significant proportion of contemporary fine craft production (in all media) makes no claim to functionality whatsoever. No longer truly functional, but still deeply saddled with utilitarian design associations and decorative qualities, and yet not quite "art," the crafts have developed an identity crisis. Reduced market demand coupled with a perceived lack of purpose has proved devastating to certain traditional crafts, holloware being a prime example.

Restricted access to, and incorporation of, newer metal-forming technologies have also added to the problem. The field of holloware has been slower to adopt new techniques, materials, or innovative trends than has the field of jewelry. Contemporary jewelers have readily embraced diverse, nontraditional technologies (e.g., anodization, electroforming, photo-etching, CAD-CAM, hydraulic die forming) and alternative materials (e.g., plastics and other nontraditional materials, refractory and other nonprecious metals). Many three-dimensional metalsmiths, on the other hand, still rely almost exclusively on the same age-old tools and techniques as their historic antecedents. The hammer, the torch, and a few select hand tools remain the mainstays of holloware technology. The rolling mill and the hydraulic press are for many the most cutting-edge technology to come along in years. This reluctance to adopt newer methods is understandable, given the expense and space considerations associated with large-scale metal-forming equipment, and its limited application in the average small, sole-proprietor studio. Because of high production costs and the predominance of one-of-a-kind or limited edition work, hand production still prevails. Understandably, change and innovation are slowed by these impediments.

No longer truly functional, but still deeply saddled with utilitarian design associations and decorative qualities, and yet not quite "art," the crafts have developed an identity crisis.

Wide geographic distribution of the field's relatively few practitioners, along with limited venues in which to convene and showcase bodies of work, also severely restrict the growth and spread of new stylistic trends. The necessity of generating a livable income from this time-, labor-, and material-intensive activity, coupled with lower marketability, further inhibits experimentation and exploration. Many pursue the making of holloware as a part-time activity, supplementing their income with some other moneymaking activity such as teaching. Because they do not share a single fashionable style of work and rarely command widespread public attention, the careers of those who remain in the field often pass in relative obscurity.

In spite of the challenges facing contemporary three-dimensional metalsmiths, they nonetheless produce incredibly creative and stylistically diverse work. In the pages that follow, we have tried to assemble a small but delectable sampling of the treasures they create. My co-curator and I hope that *Exhibition in Print 2001* will introduce to you a broad spectrum of holloware artists, both new and established. We have tried to make our selection as eclectic as possible, without personal bias or overt partiality. Though we wish we had been able to include more examples, we are pleased with our selection. We hope you will be too.

John Cogswell has been a professional jeweler for thirty-five years and a silversmith for the past twenty-one years. In addition to his studio activities, he has taught at the Parsons School of Design and is former director of the Jewelry & Metalsmithing Department of the 92nd St Y, both in New York. He has also conducted more than two hundred workshops over the past two decades.

Thickening the Edge: Contemporary Holloware in an Age of Pluralism

Lisa Gralnick

Throughout history, the vessel has remained a potent and viable metaphor. At its most basic, it is a form that both occupies space and contains it, a dialogue that occurs somewhere between the lower base and the upper rim, a vectorial indicator that digs deep roots into the earth and moves upward into spatial accessibility. The force and velocity with which that movement occurs depends on the very specific relationship among the occupied space, contained space, and the opening through which its constrained energy escapes. Thus, a vessel with a swollen belly and a narrow neck transmits a very different message than a wide-open one that does not return inward after reaching its maximum diameter. It is a form ripe with possibility, and as one that closely refers to our physical bodies, it has, in poetry and in art, become a symbol of our humanity.

It is impossible to talk about holloware of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries without saying something about the Industrial Revolution, which provided mass-produced consumer goods, and the development of photography, to which we owe the utter bombardment of our societal landscape with images. The advent of digital technology has allowed both immediate access to images through the Internet and the emergence of a new class of objects produced with computer-assisted design technologies that create quick and subtle variations in product design. Hand-crafted functional objects can no longer be experienced on their own terms, and any interaction with a crafted vessel must be seen in light of the mass-produced norm from which it deviates, as Bernard Cache points out in *Earth Moves*, his brilliant analysis of the architectural image:

> Functionalism presupposes a certain kind of structuralism. For objects exist only inasmuch as there exists a sort of contract about their use or production. In the days of craftsmanship, the traditional object was overlain with a whole set of customs and usages that were the true source of objectivity, even if some objects only had the

> status of tertiary images: frame objects, fetishes or symbols. These images did not exist in virtue of the contract; they were the very representation of it. In fact, an entire side of traditional culture only served as a reminder of the contract that was at the origin of the object.[1]

Cache's point cannot be overlooked when discussing contemporary holloware. It should also be taken into account when artists speak of "giving pleasure of use" or "beauty of function," as they often do in their statements in this *Exhibition in Print*. These statements betray the reactionary nature of many of the works being exhibited, which are not premised on the same structural contract of those produced prior to the Industrial Revolution, but rather on a contract that includes image and its accompanying history—one that completely exorcises the Bauhaus and the early modernist agenda. Such third-generation objects hold on dearly to the notion of functionalism for a kind of cultural "legality" while snubbing prudence, economy, and the purity of formalism in favor of image, decoration, and personal expression.

During the last two decades, the central debate within craft criticism has been whether craft should return to its utilitarian and domestic roots and stop trying to be "art," or whether it has reached a point where it is dealing with the same issues as the fine arts minus recognition from the art-world establishment. Arguments against craft as art have centered on early, uninspired examples of modernist sculpture by craft practitioners.[2] Both the traditionalists and the reactionaries have pointed to the intimate physical bond between man and his craft.[3] Finally, there are those who do not accept this duality, insisting on a correlation in both theory and process among concurrent works in crafts, fine arts, and music.[4] All of these approaches fall short of explaining the vast diversity of objects being produced under the umbrella of crafts.

Mine is a theory that attempts to heal the rift of duality and express the relationship of craft and art as one that is in keeping with the generally pluralistic nature of our times, and one that does not hold the mercurial state of contemporary fine arts as a standard by which craft objects should be evaluated. The histories of art and craft are contingent but parallel and were born of a common source. They affected one another and occasionally merged, and are responsible, in varying degrees, for the success of the best work in both arenas. It is true that for some time craft has become a dirty word in fine arts circles, and, almost in retaliation, there have been rumblings that art should become a dirty word in the language of crafts. It has been suggested that we call ourselves metalsmiths or jewelers, rather than insisting that we are artists, since we cling to rigid parameters set by the history of our craft, and that requires its execution with a technical virtuosity honoring its tradition, referencing its functional roots and depending on physicality.

The history of art has always included works in craft media and it always will. The degree to which the craft objects produced at any given time conform to the theoretical agenda of the fine arts world is by no means the criteria with which these objects should be examined or codified. If one wants to examine the current state of craft objects in the postmodern age, one must first attempt to understand modernism as a period in which craft underwent its own development. We can define modernism as "the term that has been used to describe the art and culture of the past hundred years,"[5] or as "an independent cultural age comparable to Greco Roman Antiquity, the Middle Ages, or the Modern Age. A look at this chronology shows that these epochs successively diminish in length. Modernism, whose beginning [can be] date[d] around 1870, seems to be drawing to a close and is unlikely to survive into the twenty-first century."[6] It is interesting that craft practitioners and theorists choose to define modernism in terms of the emergence of the theory of autonomy of the art object that, in my opinion, caused the fine arts to become a contingent art form, separating them from a history that very much included crafts. What is clear is that the Industrial Revolution coincided with and facilitated this split and that crafts entered into a period of modernist design that was very much distinguishable from modernism as it relates to the fine arts. The term "design" is itself a modern one. Rooted in the notion of a plan or preliminary drawing, it has taken on another meaning, which relates to objects produced after the Industrial Revolution in which that plan or model became the end of the creative process, and the making of objects was accomplished by a machine that reproduced it in quantity. From there the term entered into general usage, signifying problem solving at large, which included craft and where function was a necessary concern, even if the object was handmade. In spite of this larger and less specific definition, and to differentiate between the modernist theory of autonomy of the art object and the separate issues related to craft during the same era, I will use the designation "modernist design." The period to which I refer begins with a revolt against Victorian revivalism resulting in the late nineteenth century in a group of movements occurring in rapid succession across Europe and known as Art Nouveau. It included the English Arts and Crafts Movement, pioneered by William Morris, the French Art Nouveau, best exemplified in the works of Galle and Lalique, and the Austrian Wiener Werkstatte, as founded by Josef Hoffman. What these groups had in common was a secularism that broke with the past and a desire to find a unified design language that reacted to industrialization with a fervent belief in the handmade and a general distrust of the tired reworking of past decorative styles. Where the English Arts and Crafts Movement displayed an "enlightened traditionalism that focused on understated and sensible botanical motifs,"[7] the French Art Nouveau favored lively floral stylization, flowing lines, nubile nymphs, and a detached sensuality. Shortly after, the Wiener Werkstatte introduced crisp angularity and modest geometric simplicity, leading the way into what would later become the bastion of modernist design, the Bauhaus.

The Bauhaus, founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius in Weimar and shut down in 1933 by the Nazis, was the last major movement to affect crafts. Although architecture played the leading role, it was a school that attempted to unify the visual arts under a single umbrella of formalism,

stressing clarity, functionality, and a true fusion of fine art, craft, architecture, and industry. College foundation programs all across America in the postwar period were based on the Bauhaus curriculum, and its influence is still present. It is my contention that modernist design and the Bauhaus are inseparable, but that crafts have slowly distanced themselves from the Bauhaus influence, as manifested by the production of craft objects that are only tangentially functional. It may be true that early attempts by craftsman to make sculpture were less than successful. However, craft has now undergone a long and gradual evolution in which functionality has slowly diminished, and if these works appear awkward in their relationship between content and a barely functioning functionality, we finally have enough distance to appreciate that discomfort as an innate quality of transition. By holding on to its utilitarian format, craft has bought itself some time to develop a new language for the postmodern age. As the fine arts world moves away from materialism, I believe craft will be the sole inheritor of the material arts. Some may want craft to return to its former place within everyday life, but I believe its future lies elsewhere. Although I hope and believe that there will always be functional potters and silversmiths and weavers, American craft has a different mission, unique to its particular time and place, on which it has been preparing to embark. There are signs that it may already have begun.

Although I hope and believe that there will always be functional potters and silversmiths and weavers, American craft has a different mission, unique to its particular time and place, on which it has been preparing to embark.

In an essay titled "Writing About Objects We Don't Understand,"[8] Jonathan Meuli mentions a model put forth by the feminist theorist Griselda Pollock in her writing about the late nineteenth-century French avant-garde. In Pollock's model, the concept of originality is seen as contextualized, and each artist's work may be examined and understood in a relative light, free of any limitations placed on it by the canon of art history, to which it may or may not be granted entrance, and isolated from the grand theories of its own time, to which it may or may not adhere. She creates a clever triad of terms–*reference, deference*, and *difference*–that allow for a closed system in which to discuss objects whose classification in the larger historical system or analysis by prevalent theories may be neither appropriate nor effective. Since it is a model designed to discuss works that were out of the mainstream during a pivotal transition that included Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Cubism, and led to what we now see as Modern Art, it works equally well as an analytical tool for objects still very much in theoretical limbo.

Before applying this model, we must first attempt to establish the current climate in which works in craft media are being produced. The vast majority of works submitted and selected for this *Exhibition in Print* came from academically trained metalsmiths who are, in many cases, now doing the training at those same institutions. Since there is no other system in place to train metalsmiths and ensure the same level of proficiency (such as that of master-apprentice), it is safe to say then that the academic standard represents the prevailing milieu from which works of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century have emerged. Noting that most of these programs were founded by first- or second-generation modernists, including Alma Eikerman, Jack Prip, Kurt Matzdorf, Richard Thomas, and Hans Christensen, we can acknowledge the ever-present, though no longer prevailing, influence of modernist design. Artistic intent has replaced the formalist agenda, and a move away from function toward the autonomous art object has certainly occurred. New materials have begun to replace the old standbys, and the craftsman's way of working has been applied to materials formerly the domain of fine artists and industry. It is not uncommon today to find a metalsmith working in plastics, aluminum, flowers, paint, cut-up money, stone, cement, found objects, or photographs. These materials are manipulated by the craft-trained practitioner with the same precision and care devoted to traditional crafts materials, and the completed objects, which do not necessarily refer to craft history, nevertheless contain that history in the quality of the execution. While it is purported that American metals programs have become training grounds for sculptors, I do not see that this is the case. What I see is a rather confused and ambiguous field striving to move forward while holding on to that part of its past that is essential and irreplaceable. Such is the explanation for the diversity of approaches in this issue, and for the overcautious and sometimes reactionary musings of those who fear crafts will become second-rate art. However, it is as counterproductive to examine these works outside the context of crafts evolution as it is to insist that craft remain craft. Craft is not listening, and it has undergone its own transformation quite apart from what painting and sculpture are up to. A closed and relative system of inquiry, in the manner of that put forth by Pollock, can perhaps best shed light on this odd assortment of art objects called contemporary holloware.

The most traditionally based works in the exhibition belong to James Curtis, the silversmith of Williamsburg, who is producing expert near-reproductions of early American holloware, and Valentin Yotkov, who creates raised, chased, and repousséd holloware in copper based on historical Bulgarian design motifs. For both of these practitioners, superb craft and total functionality are the guiding principles, and they faithfully honor the history of their craft. Their anachronistic works must be viewed in light of Bernard Cache's point about the handmade object in the postindustrial age, and as something other than contextual appropriation or mere museum-shop-style reproduction, which would not account for the exceptional integrity displayed in their execution. They can only be seen as *referring* to the current state of metalsmithing in a reactionary way, and as simply refusing to *defer* to the standards set by the academic community, which requires originality, intent, and some semblance of autonomy. They can be seen as authentic copies of the type that Borges

refers to in his brilliant short story "Louis Menard: Author of Don Quixote."[9] In the story, the writer attempts to relive the life of Don Quixote in the late twentieth century and then rewrite the classic in his own words. In a typically clever Borgesian twist of irony, the new work and the original are presented side by side, so that the reader can examine their differences, which the writer asserts are vast. The two texts are identical, even though the climates in which they were produced were quite *different*. The new version assumes a second-generation status, and, in doing so, modifies the original and sheds light on the history to which that original belongs. In the case of the James Curtis works, it is our own history as American silversmiths that we are forced to confront, a history that included modest variations on English presentation silver of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One is understandably compelled to wonder whether this process of re-evaluation could not be accomplished simply by viewing the originals in museums. To this question I can only answer yes, it is so for the viewer; not so, on the other hand, for the maker. Perhaps it is the function of the reactionary spirit to achieve no more or less than the profound slowing down of the tides of progress, and for this we, as metalsmiths trying desperately not to lose touch with the craft that is masterfully exemplified by Curtis and Yotkov, should be grateful.

Early modernist design roots can be seen in most of the works in *Exhibition in Print* and, not surprisingly, are most apparent among the invited artists who represent an earlier generation of American smiths. However, since this issue is limited to living artists, many of the pioneers are not represented. Nonetheless, it is quite easy to see those roots in the functional holloware of Kurt Matzdorf, Fred Fenster, Chunghi Choo, Richard Mafong, Lois Etherington Betteridge, Bernard Bernstein, and John Marshall, as well as in Jack da Silva's elegantly sensual silver vessels, Charles Crowley's stunning retro teapots, and Billie Jean Theide's starkly architectural and foreboding vessels, which subtly and cleverly allude to the death of modernist design. One cannot but appreciate the modesty and altruism inherent in these objects that are designed to serve and embellish a lifestyle of peace and an ordered, dignified domesticity. Seen today, many of these works appear reactionary in their own right, refusing to *defer* to the tendency toward overconcepualization that has permeated the crafts, and remaining unerringly faithful to a craft agenda that values use and ceremony. In the case of Matzdorf, Bernstein, Mafong, and Fenster, liturgical and commemorative works have become part of their oeuvre, and one can see the influences of the postwar awakening to humanitarianism and individualism that came as a reaction against the painful legacy of Suprematism and the unified world order that had gone awry. In Kurt Matzdorf's recent *Hanukkiah Lamp*, for example, quintessentially modernist in its streamlined form, economical spirit, and absolute functionality, the form is embellished with expertly modeled two-sided figures representing the history of Jewish martyrdom. The figures are rendered with a modest lack of sentimentality. This is a strength that has always belonged to Matzdorf's style, and he is able, as a result, to imbue his works with a sense of healing and reconciliation that is characteristic of the best of the postwar modernists. In a slightly earlier work by Fred Fenster, the pewter *Star Kiddush Cup*, modernist design is coupled with the beginnings of an organic accessibility that renders the work devoid of the cool machine-age precision that often characterized modernism. I have always found this work to be luscious and startlingly elegant in its *reference* to a modified and more sensual geometry that typified the design of the 1950s through the early 1980s—a peerless example of a new type of liturgical object, one that sees religious ceremony as a fully integrated and private spiritual experience that became part of the new spirit of tolerance that dominated the mid- and late twentieth century.

The transition from modernism to postmodernism in crafts has been occasioned by an eclectic reworking of the decorative styles of the past without fully relinquishing the deeply ingrained formalist ideology. The resultant hybrids constitute a third of the works selected for this issue and are arguably the richest visually. We see in them the reappearance of highly textured, patterned, decorated surfaces, intensely colored enamels and paints, forms embellished with gemstones, mixed metals, and an overall sensibility that values beauty as "pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing."[10] In this group I include Harlan Butt, Linda Darty, Sarah Perkins, Robert Stone, Susan Elizabeth Wood, June Schwarcz, Patricia Nelson, Albion Smith, Helen Shirk, Linda Threadgill, John Michael Route, Komelia Hongja Okim, and Catherine Grisez. There is surprising coherency in the parameters to which these diverse works adhere. In all cases, the artists have chosen the vessel format for works that are barely, ceremonially functional. These are decorative objects in the best sense of that word, capable of adorning and enhancing our daily lives, but certainly not intended for everyday use. For crafts, these works are evidence of the break with modernist design, and usher in the age of postmodernism with a lively pilfering of the past. They are not devoid of content; in most it figures prominently, such as in Okim's blend of modernist essentialism with the narrative form so indicative of Korean metalsmithing. But in all cases, content is subverted by a form that is intended to be seductive and appealing. A number of these artists, such as Shirk, Threadgill, Nelson, Okim, and even Schwarcz, have deep modernist roots that can be seen in earlier works, but the featured pieces exhibit a venture into a new arena of unrestrained stylistic flourish.

Patricia Nelson, whose work has always demonstrated fin de siècle eclecticism, here exhibits a work that is rich in *references* yet refreshingly original. In her lidded copper vessel *Kantharos Ammonoidea*, Nelson acknowledges her source, the two-handled Hellenic *kantharos* drinking vessel of the fifth century B.C.E., and then exaggerates its basic awkward functionality in an almost baroque form that is merely open wirework. In the lid, she sets an ammonite, or fossilized prehistoric creature, and adds elegantly Art Nouveau–inspired handles carved of butternut. From the ammonite she takes her decorative motif, the spiral, and history repeats itself before your very eyes. What the viewer is left with is an object that *defers* to the entire history of design but *refers* directly only to itself. It's a

brilliant trick—revivalism meets formalism—and it's a wonderful example of the type of object that postmodernism allows.

Equally rich in cross-pollination are the magnificent enameled vessels of Harlan Butt, who owes his largest debt to the mannered naturalism of Art Nouveau, complete with flowing stylized snakes, toads, dragonflies, flowers, and foliage, but who also uses forms from Chinese enameled vases and patterns that resemble those of the Arts and Crafts style. These incense burners are almost irresistibly seductive in their lush colors and velvety surfaces, even to the most hardened modernist (or postmodernist). They are tight, formal, and controlled, executed with a technical perfection worthy of Fabergé, and decorated with what could be called a reserved aristocratic tastefulness.

Helen Shirk's fully realized and expertly manipulated vessels and platters, replete with naturalistic and colorful graphic images in a crackle-glaze technique, *reference* graphics of the 1950s and 1960s. These works occasionally cross boundaries into the Surrealist style of the almost airbrushed look that we associate with Dali, Tanguy, and Magritte. As with Shirk's earlier works, there is a dry and aloof sophistication to her imagery—she remains one of the extraordinary stylists working in the field today. Richard Stone's sensual raised silver vessels with Damascus steel supports merge the arts of the silver and blacksmith with a profound Art Nouveau *reference* that expresses the innate fluidity of his materials. In fact, these works reference earlier examples from the turn of the century in which glass was blown into a decorative metal armature and allowed to bulge out from the sides. Catherine Grisez's sensual monumental chased vessel forms are more form than function, closed hollow constructions engaging in inner-outer dialogues that surely reference works of the late antiquity. In most cases, the works of these craftspeople *refer* to both modernism and the history of the decorative arts, *defer* to important precedents, and *differ* significantly from them as they try to balance the often combative ménage à trois of formalism, content, and function.

Narrative work in American crafts became an important method of escaping the reins of modernism. It still *referred* to modernism only because the lessons of formalism could not be unlearned, but it chose instead to *defer* to the precedents of folk and outsider art at the same time that it took valuable cues from twentieth-century figurative sculpture. However, it *differed* drastically from both in that it attempted to bring specific personal thematic material into the crafts arena, which had very much been dominated by society's need for cultural homogeneity. I define narrative works quite broadly as those in which the artist's own voice can be heard clearly and without subterfuge, utilizing recognizable images that have direct corollaries in the real world of experience. There is certainly a history of narrative work in precious metals, from "The Court at Delhi on the Birthday of the Great Mogul Aureng-Zeb" of the infamous Dinglinger Brothers, done in the early eighteenth century for the king of Saxony, to the tour de force miniatures of Fabergé. This new work however, has clearly distanced itself from the often trite opulence of these relics of imperialism and chosen a more modest, socially aware agenda that is in keeping with the postmodernist trend.

Narrative work plays a significant role in contemporary holloware, and among its practitioners I place that of Marilyn da Silva, Robin Kraft, Richard Mawdsley, Daniel Wroblewski, Suzanne Pugh, Robly Glover, and Andrew McDonald. Particularly disturbing are the works of Wroblewski. They call into question the uneasy marriage of the craft-decorative arts agenda to personal narrative. As his artist's statement indicates, these ornate vessels allude to his past career as a police diver, using titles such as *B/M/13* (Black, male, 13 years old?) and point to the anonymity of the recovered victims. The bases of the works contain a symbol that resembles a tooth, a reference to the methods by which these victims are identified. The unsettling and socially charged thematic material, however, is in stark contrast to these precious, meticulously executed and polished chalices, a dangerous methodology that has often plagued narrative work and results in discord between subject matter and form. Choosing a powerful and meaningful theme and then relying on the beauty and preciousness of a well-executed craft object to elevate that theme is not enough. The form must act as a transparency through which the narrative can unfold, allowing content to make a convincing argument.

This overview of the holloware *Exhibition in Print* can serve as a microcosm for the changing craft agenda. The diversity of approaches suggests a field that is healthily pluralistic and unashamedly searching for an identity.

In the best of the narrative pieces, the form presented can engage the viewer in content without the aid of an artist's statement, and in this group I place da Silva, Kraft, and Mawdsley. Mawdsley has long been the ultimate practitioner of a miniaturistic style and here he doesn't disappoint—his work is awe-inspiring in its detail and complexity. Da Silva's lyrical and sensitive work, not really holloware yet still more craft than contemporary sculpture, sets up a tableau in which the viewer is invited to participate. It is undeniably captivating in its carefully chosen and beautifully rendered symbolic imagery. Kraft, on the other hand, creates a narrative within the vessel format, choosing postindustrial motifs, such as coffee mugs or metal silos that she uses in repetition. These are charming works rich in decorative textural effects that make late modernist *reference* (it is a sign of the times that we are now sentimentalizing industrialization). Their allure lies in their familiarity and lightheartedness.

In the history of Western art, many artists have looked to Asian art for inspiration. In an age of pluralism, there has been renewed interest in the blending of Eastern and Western thought. Bernard Cache offers interesting observations on the fundamental differences between the two:

> The first architectural gesture is acted upon the earth: it is our grave or our foundation. A plane against a surface of variable curvature, the first frame is an excavation. But perhaps this is just the

> bedrock of Western thought. We put substance first: the hard, the full. Eastern thought puts the void first, and therefore the first frame is not an excavation but its negative: a screen. Unlike our Western architecture whose first frame confronts the earth, Japanese architecture raises its screens to the wind, the light, and the rain. Partitions and parasols rather than excavations: screens emphasize the void. [11]

Two artists, Tom Odell and Dennis Nahabetian, seem to emphasize the void in their work, and both acknowledge the influence of Oriental art in their artist's statements. I could also have included both Chunghi Choo and Komelia Okim in this category, because their work certainly exhibits the influence of Korean metalsmithing and the elegant, ethereal forms that one associates with the arts of Japan, China, and Korea. However, Choo and Okim retain ties to modernism, which makes their work eclectic, whereas Nahabetian and Odell seem to work philosophically outside of mainstream American metals. The latter makes quiet and modest Kensui bowls that are often raised from Japanese alloys or utilize the Japanese *mokume-gane* process. The works convey a profound sense of the Buddhist belief in the tautology of wholeness and nothingness; the subtle details of surface are integrated with the form, which is always open and does not constrain. Equally effective yet quite different are Nahabetian's works, which employ a textile process to create rigid, colored screenlike forms that are visually light as air and rhythmic in their tightly controlled yet fluid structure. They neither occupy space nor contain it but instead allude to a temporality that is breathtaking in its fragility.

The final group of works I will discuss are the most diverse and defy ready classification. These are the craft objects of a pluralistic and postmodern age. They make no pretense to utility, and allude to history as a point of *reference* and not as a validation. In this group I include the works of Cappy Counard Wolf, Felicia Szorad, Evan Larson, Leonard Urso, Miel Paredes, and Myra Mimlitsch-Gray. Urso and Paredes have created works that are patently sculptural in the traditional sense, and one cannot but mention the legacy of expertly crafted sculpture that includes both Cellini and Brancusi. Here one finds *deference* to a tradition that is all but lost in the fine arts arena, a reincarnation of sorts, with the added bonus that the new works are much more about metal and its history than those earlier precedents to which they *refer*. Urso, who left behind a body of work of almost mythic proportion when I was in graduate school at New Paltz more than twenty years ago, is known for spectacular holloware covered with ornate chasing and repoussé, Italianate masterpieces of a Romantic sensibility. For this *EiP* he submitted two bodies of work, drastically different yet oddly persuasive as a pair, both *referencing* two differing traditions in metal—figurative sculpture and functional crafts—and both suggesting a spirit torn by a desire to move forward without abandoning tradition. The work of Miel Paredes is curious and undeniably quixotic. She creates odd, disturbing animalistic forms presented on anonymous plaster busts suggesting helmets or headgear. Her use of the cow addresses both language and social convention. In her artist's statement, she writes that in Spanish the same word is used for language and tongue, and that cow's tongue is a staple of the Hispanic diet. The works are both grotesque and strangely beautiful in their skillful modeling, and lurid in their expressionistic positioning on the head. The artist refers to phrenology, the now antiquated belief that the shape of the skull indicates certain things about the mind and personality of an individual. One can only assume that these engaging works pose questions relative to her own cultural identity.

The work of Myra Mimlitsch-Gray stands out as a hopeful harbinger of the future of crafts and metalsmithing. In her platters and vessels, she uses the age-old indicator of a hand-raised piece of holloware, the faceted surface, as her point of departure. She reconstructs these surface marks on a magnified scale with fabrication techniques. Mimlitsch-Gray is a master at diversionary tactics; while creating seductive, beautifully made objects that pay almost reverential homage to her craft, she does a subtle yet profound about-face, calling into question the prerequisites and conventions she honors. One can't help but take the bait and, in doing so, recognize the brilliance of her ruse—the viewer is engaged for precisely the reasons that the history of craft and its accompanying dogma has dictated.

This overview of the holloware *Exhibition in Print* can serve as a microcosm for the changing craft agenda. The diversity of approaches suggests a field that is healthily pluralistic and unashamedly searching for an identity. The age of postmodernism and poststructuralism has arrived for the craft practitioner, and there are strong indicators that content will come from the rich history of the field. Craft will remain craft, and some craft will, as always, be art. A sensitivity to materials and a way of working with those materials with respect, control, and the promise of physical seduction will prevail, carrying the torch of the material arts through the twenty-first century. The field has been both overtly critical of itself, in part in reaction to postmodernist theory, and it is time that it starts to evaluate its recent history for what it is, an awkward transition from its functional history to its redefined role as the proponent of materialism.

Lisa Gralnick has been a full-time faculty member and served as head of the Metals program at Parsons School of Design in New York City for the past eleven years. This fall she will assume a new position as assistant professor of art at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, teaching alongside Fred Fenster.

NOTES

1 Bernhard Cache, *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories*, trans. Anne Boyman (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995), p. 94.
2 Bruce Metcalf, "Replacing the Myth of Modernism," *American Craft*, (February–March 1993), pp. 40-47.
3 Bruce Metcalf, "Craft and Art, Culture and Biology," in *The Culture of Craft*, ed. Peter Dormer (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 67–82.
4 Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Book* (London: Faber & Faber, 1940).
5 Suzi Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), p.11.
6 Sandro Bocola, *The Art of Modernism*, trans. Catherine Schelbert and Nicholas Levis (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1999), p. 26.
7 Alastair Duncan, *Art Nouveau* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), p. 10.
8 Jonathon Meuli, "Writing About Objects We Don't Understand," in Dormer, *The Culture of Craft*, pp. 202–18.
9 Jorge Luis Borges, *Ficciones* (New York: Grove Press, 1962), pp. 45–57.
10 George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955).
11 Cache, *Earth Moves*, p. 63.

EXHIBITION IN PRINT 2001

JAMES A. CURTIS WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

The work done in my shop strongly reflects the methods and styles that would have been practiced in the eighteenth-century workshop of colonial Williamsburg silversmith James Craig. My staff and I cast ingots of sterling and then forge them into sheet. We use hand raising, caulking, and planishing to create functional and beautiful silver holloware that is typical of the sort Craig and his eighteenth-century contemporaries would have been producing for the rich tidewater planters and merchants and for the Anglican Church. From the small-lidded nesting double tumbler, which a gentleman might carry when traveling, to the finely pierced, elegant breadbasket that would have adorned the dining table in a large plantation house, all of my work reflects the tastes and aspirations of the privileged few who could afford silver in eighteenth-century tidewater Virginia.

left
Bread Basket, 2000
sterling silver
13 1/2 x 17 x 13"
Photo: Tom Green

above
Sauce Boat, 2000
sterling silver
5 x 7 1/2 x 3 3/4"
Photo: Tom Green

VALENTIN YOTKOV BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

I am primarily a silversmith, yet I am attracted to the warmth and beauty of copper and often use it in my work. It appears to me the perfect material to incorporate with elaborate chased and repoussé designs—my favorite form of expression in metal. Such designs, enhanced by the richly colored copper patina, add a remarkably decorative feeling to the vessel.

Presented works reflect my devotion to the handmade. They were inspired by the centuries-old ceremonial vessels used during religious services and domestic rituals in my homeland of Bulgaria. Each piece is completed entirely by hand, preserving techniques and skills almost wiped out by modern technology.

In contradiction to the advancement of our day, I enjoy doing things the "old way." My works pay tribute to a powerful tradition, and to a great teacher, who passed on to me his passionate love for the metal some twenty years ago.

above
Bowl, 1996
chased and patinaed copper
7 1/2 x 5 x 5"
Photo: Plamen Petkov

right
Vase, 1996
patinaed and repousséd copper
12 1/4 x 5 1/4 x 5 1/4"
Photo: Plamen Petkov

CHUNGHI CHOO IOWA CITY, IOWA

In my holloware, I like to see simplicity, harmony, and grace. I would like each piece to appear sensuous and celebratory, a pleasure to use and a pleasure to view.

left
Tea Serving Set, 1987
electroformed copper, silver plate, ebony
18 x 8 1/2 x 5 1/4"
Photo: Peter Krumhardt
Collection Davenport Museum of Art, Davenport, Iowa

below
Vessel, 1989
electroformed copper, acrylic, lacquer paint
8 x 8 x 6 3/4"
Photo: Peter Krumhardt
Collection American Craft Museum, New York

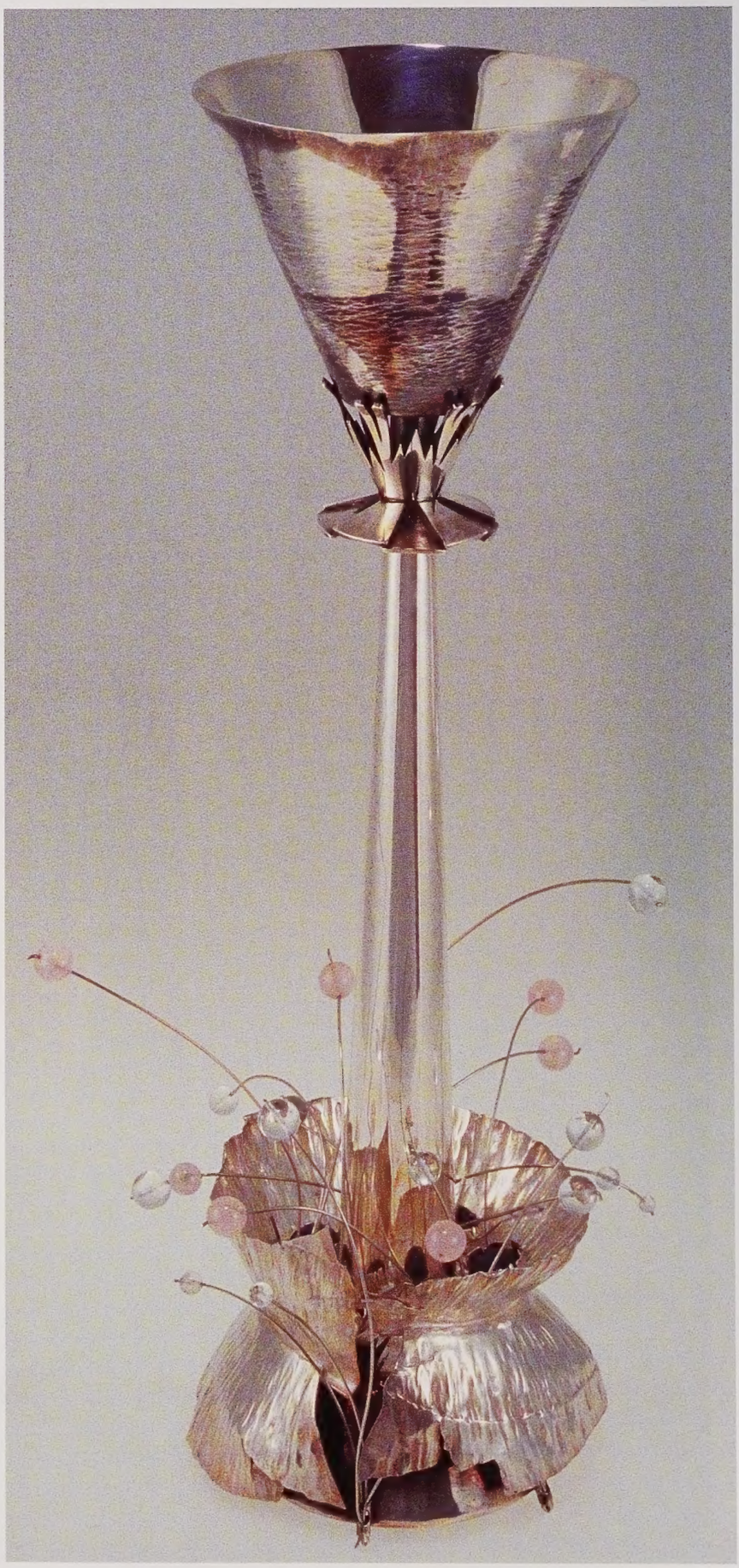
LOIS ETHERINGTON BETTERIDGE GUELPH, ONTARIO

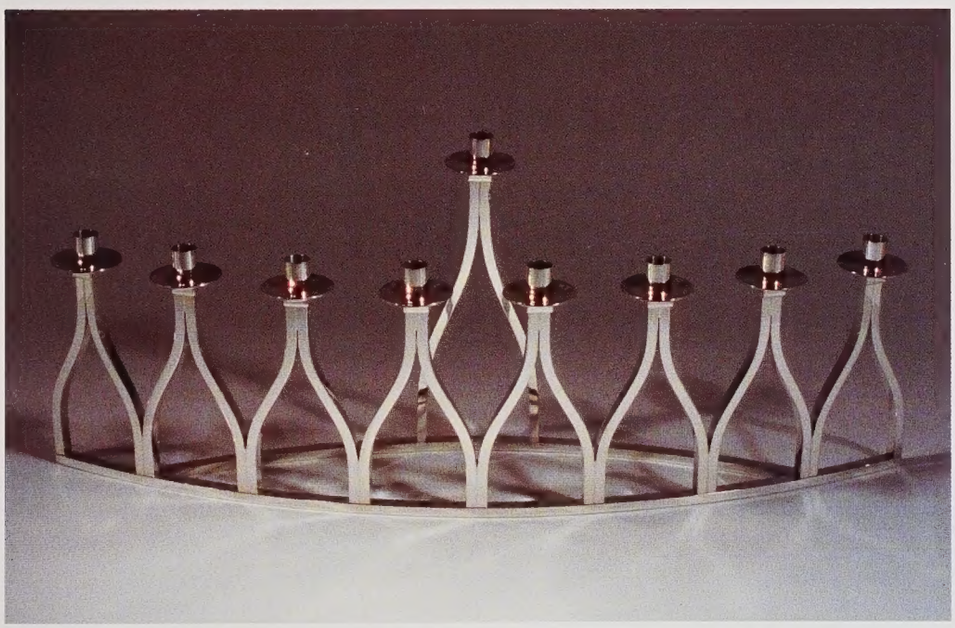
For me, the functional object is a way to acknowledge and celebrate the many "rituals" of our daily routines. Rituals we may not be aware of, but which, when celebrated, become meaningful, beautiful and formal, extending the role of objects far beyond mere function. The things we use as a matter of course can enrich our lives by their beauty, by the atmosphere they create, or by evoking personal as well as "tribal" (unconscious) memories.

The most difficult and yet exciting aspect of my chosen métier is the virtual lack of limitations in the metals themselves as a medium of expression, thus thrusting the conception and development of ideas squarely into my hands. The consequent decision making is part of being an artist—and a marvelous freedom.

above
"Cactus Boot" Spice Shaker, 1998
sterling silver
5 1/2 x 3 x 3"
Photo: Keith Betteridge

right
Wedding Cup, 1994
sterling silver, moonstones, lapis lazuli
11 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2"
Photo: Keith Betteridge





BERNARD BERNSTEIN BRONX, NEW YORK

I approach the design of Jewish ritual art with these goals: To create objects that, by virtue of their skillful execution, quality of material, fitness for use, spiritual significance, and elegance of form, will promote in the participants of the Mitzvoth a special state of mind: that they are in a sacred place during a sacred moment.

To create objects that can be appreciated in the present as timeless rather than transient, and will continue to be treasured as such a thousand years from today.

above
Havdalah Set, 1999
sterling silver
4 1/2 x 3 x 3"

left
Hanukah Lamp, 1999
sterling silver
15 1/2 x 6 1/8 x 2 3/4"

CHARLES A. CROWLEY GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

I have been working in holloware for almost twenty years. During this time, I have continually explored functional vessel forms, primarily sterling teapots and tea services, which utilize a combination of spinning and handwork. Often the holloware is set in an architectural context, using tables, shelves, or wall brackets to create a specific space for the pieces to exist in. I try to translate the natural into the tangible, using as inspiration a range of things, from the gesture or stance of a human which is turned into an expressive spout or handle of a teapot, to the use of plant and flower imagery as decorative elements. The pieces I've submitted include two distinct bodies of work. The first includes two small teapots and a wall-mounted teapot on a shelf. The second body of work is a natural progression from my earlier holloware, combining vessel forms even more directly with architecture. In this I am referring back to decorative ironwork and drawing from more historical forms. Although the work is visually far-reaching, there is a thread that runs throughout, which aims for a clean, machined appearance without losing the maker's hand.

left
Small Yellow Handle Teapot, 1999
sterling silver, painted aluminum
height 9"
Photo: Dean Powell

below
Small Red Handle Teapot, 1999
sterling silver, painted aluminum
height 6"
Photo: Dean Powell

JACK DA SILVA PINOLE, CALIFORNIA

As conceptual approaches to metalwork have led many metal artists to create objects that express a personal narrative, some seem to depend on function as a rationale rather than an intended goal.

Personally, I find the creation of functional objects a fulfilling and intriguing challenge both technically and aesthetically. While work that is mainly achieved mechanically may be accomplished "quickly" and with "less effort" in some respects, it often seems to reflect a machine's soul, with the maker's intent a mere adornment.

Metalwork generated through actual smithing methods allows me, I believe, the greatest expression of form, a reflection of my heart, mind, and soul that flows from the very crystalline structure as it realigns under the blow of the hammer.

As we now understand through research, it is the use of the hand that forms the mind, not the other way around. In the palm of our hands, with a hammer, exists the possibility to beat the swords into plowshares.

above
Bowl, 1998
sterling silver
6 x 8 x 10"
Photo: Almac

left
Elijah's Blossom, 1997
sterling silver
5 x 5 x 5"
Photo: Almac

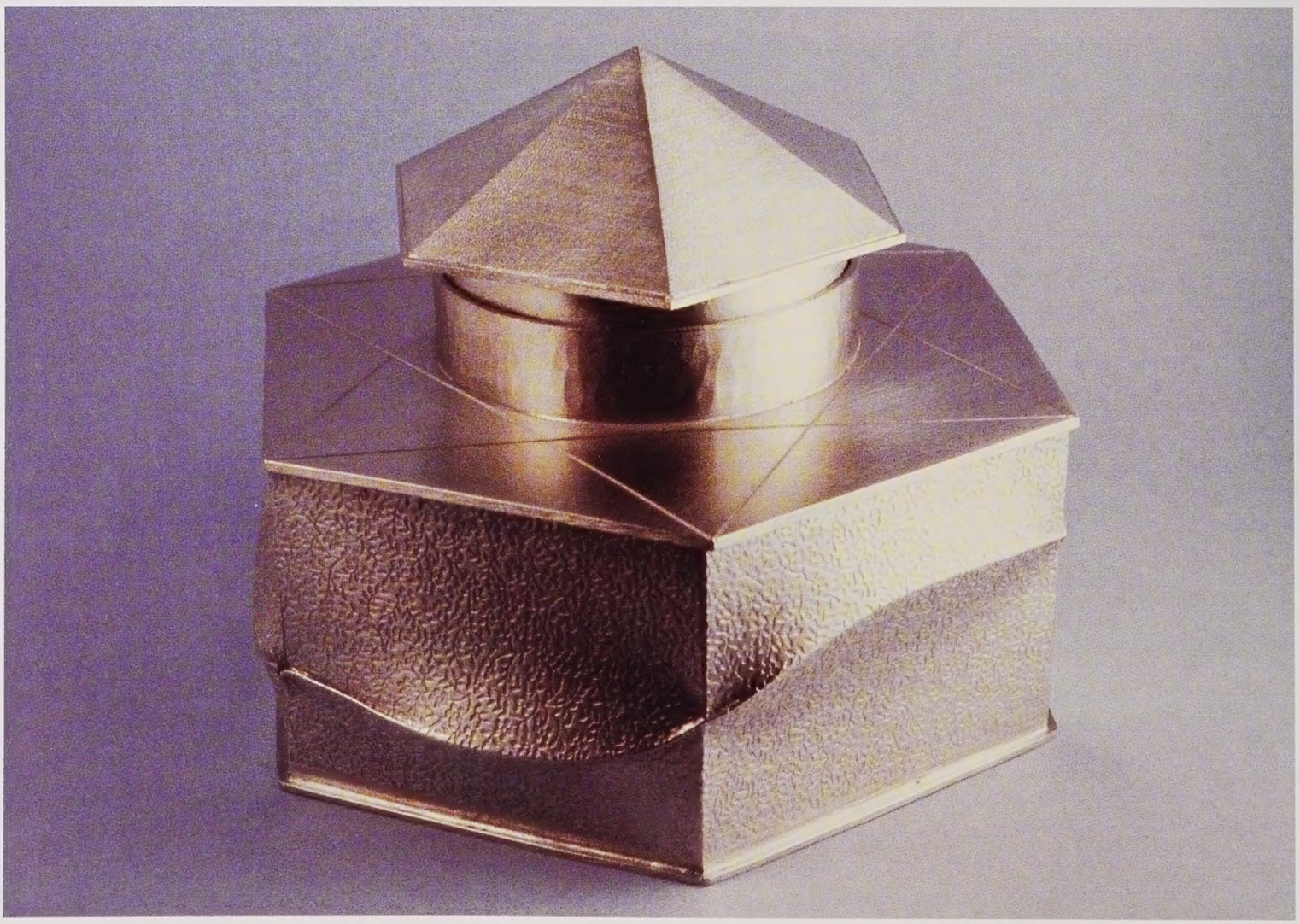
FRED FENSTER SUN PRAIRIE, WISCONSIN

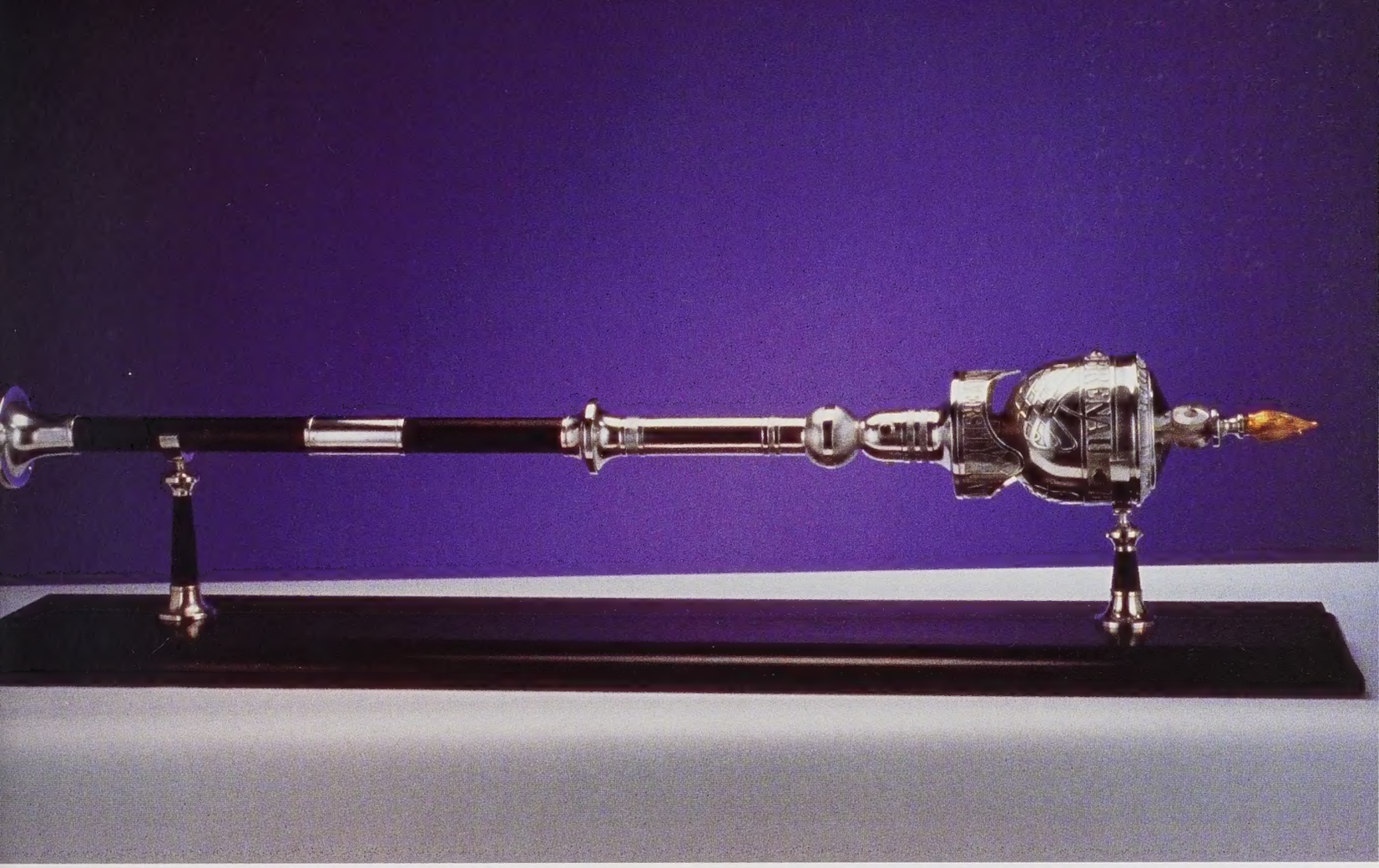
My work consists primarily of functional objects made for use in the home. These objects are made to grace the table and sideboard. They are utilitarian in concept, made to function well and give tactile as well as visual pleasure. I work with silver, pewter, copper, brass, and bronze to shape objects that are well balanced and visually interesting.

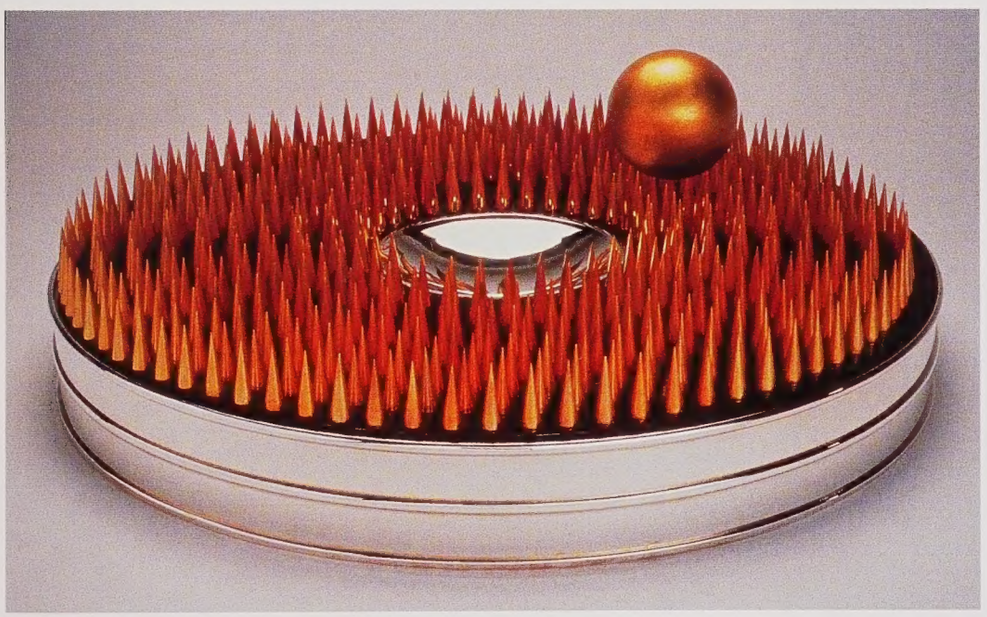
I hope that my work conveys the sense of enjoyment that I experience in the making of these objects and the lasting pleasure they may bring to the eventual owner.

left
Star Kiddush Cup, 1985
pewter
height 9"

below
Charity Box, 1998
pewter
4 x 8 x 8"







RICHARD MAFONG ATLANTA, GEORGIA

My works are influenced by my ethnic background, the study of historical objects, techniques, travels, and life experiences in general. It is the accumulation of all these experiences and technical expertise that I eventually translate into design elements and use in creating my works.

above
Ceremonial Mace for Brenau University, 1997
sterling silver, walnut, moonstones, citrines
56 x 6 x 6"
Photo: Bart Kasten

left
PI with Sphere, 1997
silver plated and gold plated brass, patinated steel
6 x 19 x 19"
Photo: Bart Kasten

JOHN C. MARSHALL SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The experience of holloware gives me great pleasure, and I continue to have respect for the art of capturing and dividing space with metal. When working metal from a flat sheet to a hollow form, the positive is between the inside and outside of space. The metalsmith is the only one knowing its true integrity. Raising or stretching, course by course, the form changes very subtly. In a time when we are so obsessed with change and the amount of time change takes, this traditional art form gives and allows change while continuing to demand time. There will always be the respect needed and returned by time from the craftsman to the art. When this orchestration is simultaneous, it is the formula for one of a kind. The silver holloware community is small, mainly because of the demands of perfection and expertise, both for the craftsman and the collector. I find this refreshing in a time of numbers, illusion, and special effects. The tradition of silver holloware creates a mixed emotion for me. In some cases, it's a harness or drag, but I still enjoy the challenge to meet its standards. I'm always trying to create and invent the twists or shapes that, if arranged in the right proportions and spatial relationships, will make space and form create a new emotion.

above
Coffee and Tea Service, 2000
sterling silver, basalt, delrin
coffeepot: 12 x 5 x 5 1/4"
teapot: 9 1/2 x 10 1/2 x 6"
Photo: Jerry Davis

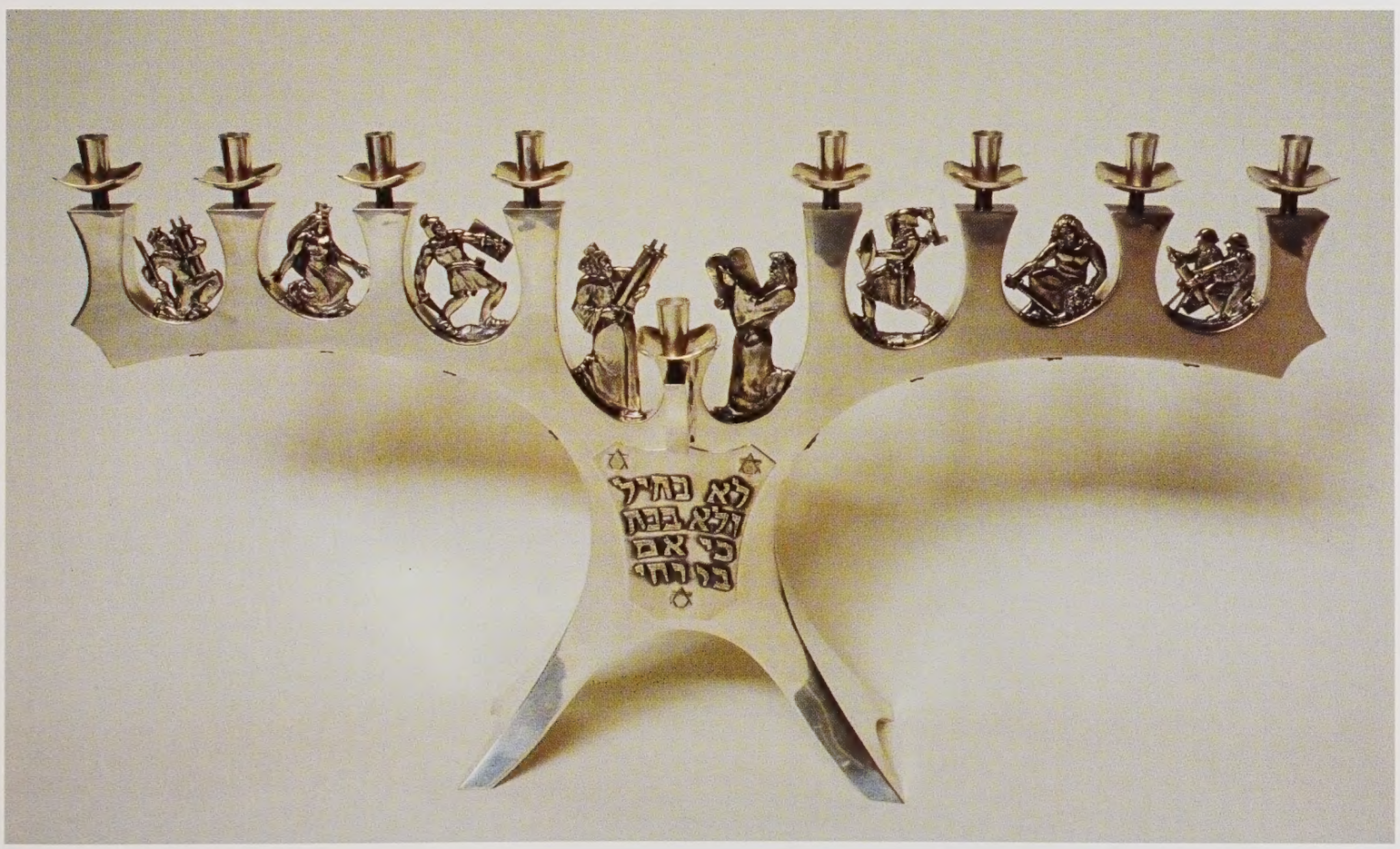
left
Reflections, 2000
copper, silver, basalt
Height 16"
Photo: Jerry Davis

KURT J. MATZDORF NEW PALTZ, NEW YORK

I started creative silversmithing in 1953, when it seemed moribund. I wanted to make it the fine and meaningful art that it had been at the height of previous civilizations and our own until this century. Ceremonial and religious silversmithing seemed particularly well suited to the storytelling and creation of beauty that I enjoy. It also lets me practice my definition of art: something created by humans for humans that deals with human concerns.

left
New York Public Library President's Cup, 1998
sterling silver, 14k gold
12 x 6 x 6"

below
Jewish Martyrs and Fighters for Freedom, 2000
sterling silver
10 1/2 x 20 x 4"



BILLIE JEAN THEIDE CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

Webster's defines color as, "a visual quality. . ." In Billie Jean Theide's work, color serves as a conceptual device as well as a visual quality. In her fabricated and electroformed teapots, Theide references western and southwestern landscapes of North America. Viewed from a distance, the landscape influences the three-dimensional forms, whereas closer observations of the land impact the textural and color qualities of the work. Color is achieved in a variety of approaches, depending on the desired result; she employs patination, enamel, and enamel paint and combinations of these. Patinated surfaces are smooth and pristine or, other times, heavily encrusted; enameled and painted surfaces are monochromatic, subtly blended, or graphically rendered. Ultimately, it is Theide's intention to provoke a feeling of monumentalism, in spite of scale, and convey a sense of timelessness and mystery. While her primary references are land formations, her forms are also reminiscent of flat irons, tugs, ironclads, and Yixing teapots. In her latest work, combinations of silver plate and fabricated copper, Billie Jean Theide creates hybrid teapot forms. This cross-breeding of contemporary and historical elements results in intentionally playful, peaceful, or uncomfortable objects.

above
Hybrid (Van Bergh), 2001
copper, silver plate, acrylic urethane
7 x 9 x 2 1/2"
Photo: Rimas Visgirda

left
Hybrid 2 (Oneida), 2000
copper, silver plate, patina
5 1/4 x 10 3/4 x 2"
Photo: Rimas Visgirda

CATHERINE GRISEZ SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

My vessels and music boxes are primarily inspired by plant and sea life. The current series of bowls is a formal exploration of natural forms, whereas the music boxes interpret personal experiences through these forms. By combining music and detailed textures with simple organic shapes, I make sculptures with a broad sensory appeal. In doing so, I hope to invoke the viewer's sense of surprise and curiosity.

In both my vessels and music boxes, I use the processes of cold-forming and fabricating brass, bronze, copper, and silver. I have used many techniques that provide a tactile richness, such as casting and electroforming, in addition to the more traditional holloware methods of chasing and repoussé. I occasionally combine the metalwork with a small treasure (such as a cowry shell) or alternative materials (such as latex) to more clearly illustrate an idea.

left
Bowl #8, 2000
brass, copper
12 x 11 1/2 x 5 1/2"
Photo: Doug Yaple

below
September (music box), 1999
brass, copper, sterling silver
10 x 5 1/4 x 4 3/4"
Photo: Doug Yaple

LINDA DARTY GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

My metalwork, an exploration of form and surface, is almost always narrative, recording my memories while incorporating my love of color and graphic imagery. I am inspired by places and people important to me, backyard gardens, my children's tree house . . . homes I remember from childhood. I prefer to work in silver for its elegance and the sense of preciousness it imparts. Graphic details are often etched, creating recesses for rich, soft surfaces of enamel, or drawings to be embellished with gold-foil overlay. It is important that the pieces function in a useful way, adding beauty to everyday rituals or ceremony to special occasions; whether lighting candlesticks or raising a vessel in toast, my work celebrates my memories.

above
Garden Candlesticks, 1999
sterling silver, vitreous enamel
4 1/2 x 3 x 3" each
Photo: Henry Stindt

left
Bridges and Swings, 1996
sterling silver, 24k gold overlay (kumbo)
8 x 7 x 6" each
Photo: Henry Stindt

HARLAN W. BUTT DENTON, TEXAS

Preferring the forms of rocks and trees to architecture and machinery, my influences often come from the flora and fauna of the places where I have lived, their colors, textures, and shapes. But as a human being, I also live in a world of relationships, interaction, and communication, so text often appears somewhere on my work.

Many of my most recent pieces have employed cloisonné in a repeated pattern. From the cell structure of plants and animals to the multiplicity of stars in the night sky to the days in our lives, repetition can create structure out of chaos.

Color has a strong emotional impact in my work. In addition, color can bring to mind specific times or places. When presented in a certain context, color can evoke memories or fantasies. Using color, pattern, shape, and text, I try to make objects that express the exquisite nature of reality.

left
Earth Beneath Our Feet #7, 2000
copper, enamel, gold
5 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 7"
Photo: Rafael Molina

below
Earth Beneath Our Feet #6, 2000
silver, enamel, copper
7 x 7 x 7"
Photo: Rafael Molina

KOMELIA HONGJA OKIM ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

As a Korean-American artist educated both in the U.S. and Korea, I envision a dynamic intercultural contrast where differing elements can be united and integrated to create natural harmony and balance. My work depicts the various interactions between people and landscapes, symbolizing the gestures and mood of humans in the natural environment. Simultaneously, I balance my media and colors. The human life on this planet is tightly interwoven with the workings of nature and the environment. Thus keen awareness of the flow of this interchange can increase and enhance individual happiness, wealth, and vitality. My work relates and points to the philosophical system of *feng shui* (Chinese) or *Poong sue* (Korean), focusing on the dynamic relationship between humans and their environment, to live well and excel in harmony with nature.

left
Winter Contemplation, 1999
silver, 24k gold (*kum-boo*)
9 x 6 x 4 1/2"
Photo: James Threadgill

below
By the Seaside, 1997
silver, 24k gold (*kum-boo*)
7 1/2 x 7 x 5"

SARAH PERKINS SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

I am interested in integrating the two materials I use: metal and vitreous enamel. Rather than completely covering the metal surface with enamel, there is always some metal that rises to the surface or defines an edge. The surfaces are mostly enameled because I love the color, the image making, and the decorative qualities of enamel. The two work together to make a whole that would not otherwise be possible.

above
Green Triple Cup, 2000
fine silver, enamel
3 1/4 x 3 1/4 x 3 1/4"
Photo: Tom Mills

left
Classic Folded Vessel, 1998
fine silver, enamel
8 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/2"
Photo: Tom Mills

PATRICIA A. NELSON MUNCIE, INDIANA

I enjoy making functional objects. The demands of making something that can be used in the performance of a task or a ritual interest me. The ways that forms open and close, sit on a surface, hold their contents, and are picked up create challenging problems to solve.

Recently, I have begun to attach, or otherwise integrate, Paleozoic era fossils into the forms. I use small fossilized plants or animals in situ, with enough of the surrounding stone carved away to reveal the organisms, but with enough matrix remaining so that the resting place and configuration of the organisms are evident. Also, the fossils are not polished; instead, the organisms are seen the way they would be revealed by a geologist.

Incorporating fossils into my vessels has added another layer of meaning to my work. I have always worked in layers, in both form and content. I layer textured and colored metal into complex structures by means of soldering, riveting, bolting, and other types of connections. The technical problems of connection are of particular interest to me, as they require the mental state of both an artist and an engineer.

above
Kantharos Ammonoidea, 2000
copper, ammonite, butternut wood
10 x 24 x 12"
Photo: Serena Nancarrow

left
Crinoid Vessel: Homage to Ernst Haeckel, 2000

ON MICHAEL ROUTE FREDERIC, WISC

I do not believe craft must be art. It's option

I am concerned with function, the nature chosen material, and whimsy.

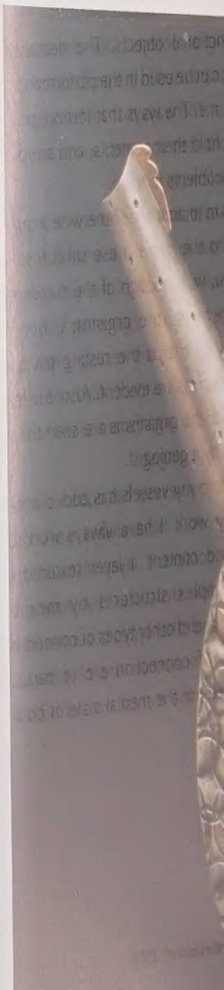
Functionality, as I see it has multiple levels gives me a chance to discuss the gamut, fro special occasion to the purely decorative. I truly that people can use if they so desire.

I am trying to assist in bringing pewter o century. This wonderfully soft malleable and fu feeding the absolute core of my artistic formidable connotations to deal with: i.e. Revere, and its second-class position to silver.

Whimsy, perhaps in this case "attitudinal ar my way of not taking art (or craft, or metalsmi too seriously. It also allows me to connect with t level.

right
Steeple Teapot, 2000
pewter, brass, copper
10 1/2 x 9 x 5"
Photo: Deb Route

below
Cats Chamomile, Camelot, 2000
pewter, brass, copper
10 x 8 1/2 x 4"
Photo: Deb Route



JON MICHAEL ROUTE FREDERIC, WISCONSIN

I do not believe craft must be art. It's optional.

I am concerned with function, the nature and context of my chosen material, and whimsy.

Functionality, as I see it has multiple levels. The work I present gives me a chance to discuss the gamut, from everyday "ware" to special occasion to the purely decorative. I truly enjoy making things that people can use if they so desire.

I am trying to assist in bringing pewter out of the eighteenth century. This wonderfully soft malleable and functional metal, while feeding the absolute core of my artistic soul, also provides formidable connotations to deal with: i.e., Queen Anne/Paul Revere, and its second-class position to silver.

Whimsy, perhaps in this case "attitudinal anthropomorphism," is my way of not taking art (or craft, or metalsmithing, etc.) or myself too seriously. It also allows me to connect with the viewer on another level.

right
Steeple Teapot, 2000
pewter, brass, copper
10 1/2 x 9 x 5"
Photo: Deb Route

below
Cats, Chamomile, Camelot, 2000
pewter, brass, copper
10 x 8 1/2 x 4"
Photo: Den Route

JUNE SCHWARCZ SAUSALITO, CALIFORNIA

I love, collect and am influenced by many different kinds of art, including ancient, tribal, and contemporary art. I want to make objects that are beautiful to a sensitive observer. The nature of the kind of beauty I want would be another long discussion. I enjoy working within the limitations and complications of the materials and techniques I use. The powdered, transparent, vitreous enamel can bring light below the surface. The thin foil makes it possible to achieve soft effects in a hard substance. The fact that electroplating does not plate all surfaces evenly is a blessing and a burden, but must be considered. It is possible to achieve surfaces with heavy plating technique. That would be impossible or difficult with any other process.

left
"2157" Vase, 2000
electroformed copper foil, enamel
11 1/2 x 7 x 7"
Collection Forrest Merrill

below
"2151" Vase, 1999
electroformed copper foil, enamel
9 3/4 x 7 5/8 x 8"
Collection Mr. & Mrs. Mark Lainer
Photo: Lee Fatherree

HELEN SHIRK LA MESA, CALIFORNIA

The power and diversity of the landscape provides a rich resource from which to draw inspiration and meaning for my work. My interest in brilliantly colored and textured forms reflects the lasting impact of time spent in western Australia, one of the richest and most varied wildflower areas in the world. In each piece I try to create the feeling of sensuousness, strangeness, and vitality that I find in the natural world. This recent series of standing cups and teapots also reflects my respect for the history and use of functional pieces as well as their potential to commemorate what is significant, inspirational, and intriguing in life.

above
Sustaining Sprit XXVII, 2000
copper, patina, colored pencils
6 x 23 x 23"

right
Commemorative Cup V, 2000
copper, patina, colored pencils
21 x 7 x 7"

ALBION SMITH SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA

Albion Smith is a native Californian studio jeweler who has been working in this medium for the past nineteen years. His career in metalwork began at the age of sixteen, and by the age of nineteen he was doing industrial welding. After spending eight years as a functional sculptor, he found his way into jewelry. This is the field he finds most satisfying in which to give expression to his distinctive style.

Personally attached to handwork, he crafts every aspect of each piece himself, without studio assistance of any kind. Albion enjoys a feeling of solidarity with the preindustrial craft makers.

His designs cannot be attributed to any specific time period or style, but he has a distinct fondness for the Celtic and medieval. And in keeping with his own Arts and Crafts movement philosophy, he takes particular pleasure in creating functional jeweled objects. His attraction to container items has much to do with the fact that they are made to be used rather than displayed.

above
Teapot #16, 2000
sterling silver, chrysoprase, sapphire, amber, wenge
5 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 5 5 1/2"
Photo: Carol Holaday

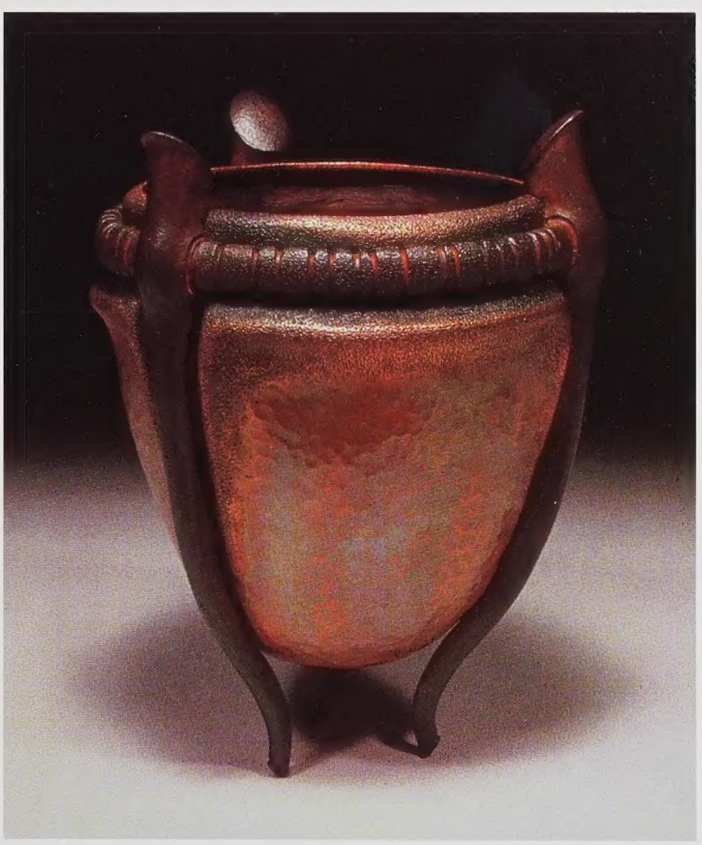
left
Teapot #17, 2000
sterling silver, 18k gold, blue chalcedony, turquoise, wenge, fossil ivory
8 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/2"
Photo: Carol Holaday

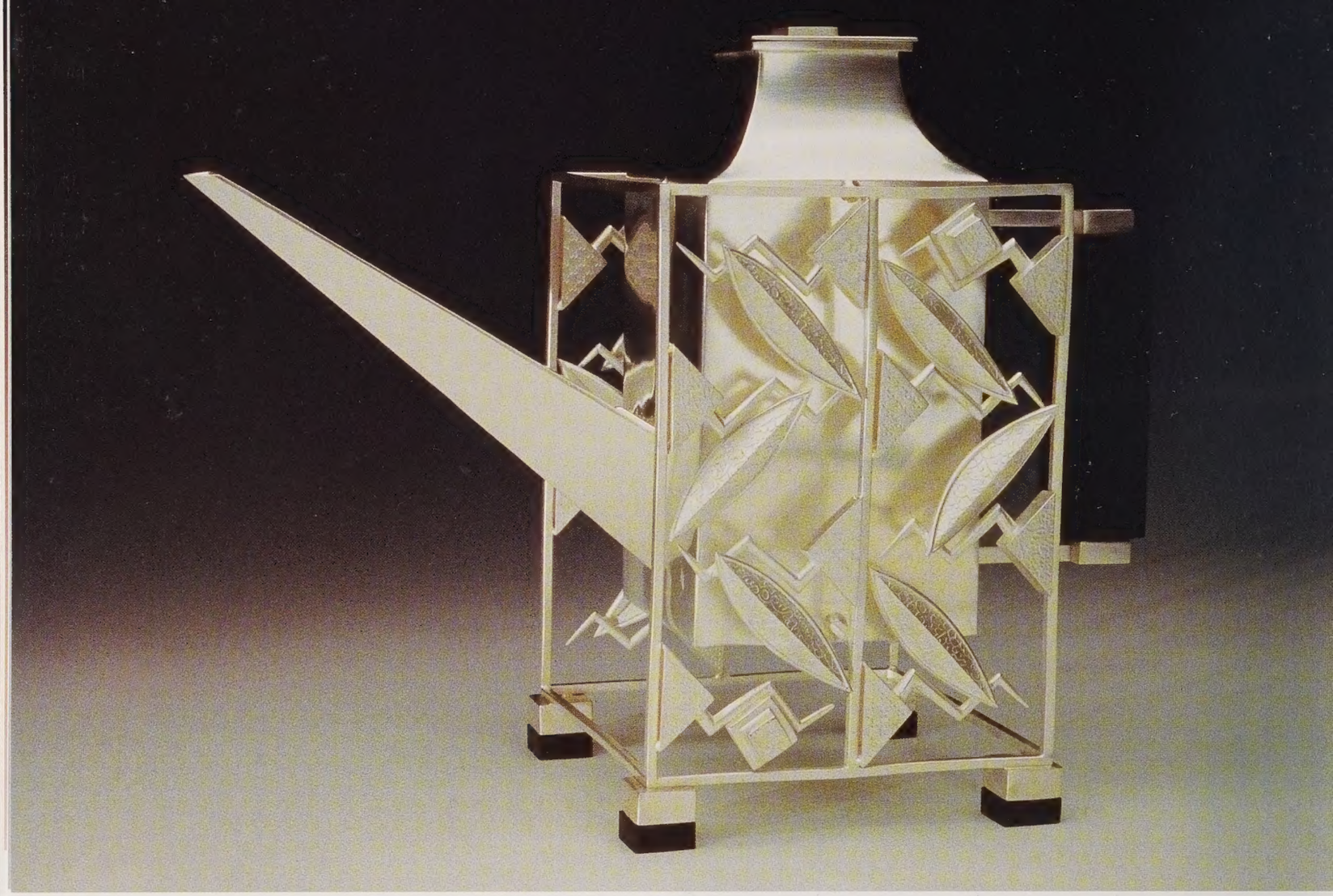
RICHARD L. STONE AMARILLO, TEXAS

The raising process lends itself wonderfully to the creation of organic vessel forms. This, with the addition of forged steel elements, is the core of this body of work. The forms themselves are inspired by the actual manipulation of material. The reaction of the material to hammering and its resistance to formation is often exaggerated in order to support the sense of form. I try to use the relationship between the different elements and the influence each has upon another to explore and relate the plasticity of the sheet metal.

left
Cup, 1999
sterling silver, damascus steel
15 x 6 x 6"

below
Urn, 1999
copper, steel
8 x 6 x 6"





LINDA THREADGILL EAST TROY, WISCONSIN

This work is created in the carefully considered context of social exchange, and the functional aspect of these objects is part of its identity.

I am interested in the evolution of ornament from natural forms and in the ways in which ornament facilitates or veils the understanding of the object it decorates.

Elements are kept distinct by decorative means when a structure and its ornament are harmonious. I am interested in the fact that decoration is rarely scrutinized and affects us less consciously—as in the frame of a painting. My work is an effort to strike a balance among surface complexity, the proliferation of pattern, and the structure as they set up rival attractions.

The etched surface patterns are two-dimensional "fictions" of the organic natural forms from which they are derived. These repetitive motifs belong to culture, specifically feminine culture, as the patterns were often derived from domestic wallpaper and fabric.

The technical studies have evolved from a desire to adapt intricate surface embellishments as a design vocabulary in the practice of metalsmithing. My work is not a critique of craft but a reverent performance of it.

above
Teapot, 2000
sterling silver, ebony
7 x 8 1/2 x 3 3/4"
Photo: James Threadgill

left
Teapot and Stand, 2000
sterling silver, maple
13 x 10 3/4 x 10"
Photo: James Threadgill

SUSAN ELIZABETH WOOD MENDOCINO, CALIFORNIA

As a goldsmith, I am heir to an ancient tradition whose values include a genuine respect for form and beauty, utility and craftsmanship. I strive to let my work reflect those values. I draw my inspiration from archetypal symbols and traditional utilitarian forms, and from this matrix I endeavor to create objects whose intimate relationship to the user creates a space for personal reflection. Quite simply, my work celebrates the sacred. The objects I make call the user to step away, however briefly, from the mundane, and to focus on the greater and deeper meaning of our lives: the importance of our spiritual selves, our connections to others, and our relationship to the divine.

left
Chalice, 1997
sterling silver,14k gold, 18k gold, amethysts
10 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2"
Photo: Maria Shipper

below
Wedding Shrine, 2000
copper, sterling silver, 14k gold, black bamboo
7 1/2 x 5 x 2 1/2"
Photo: Hap Sakwa

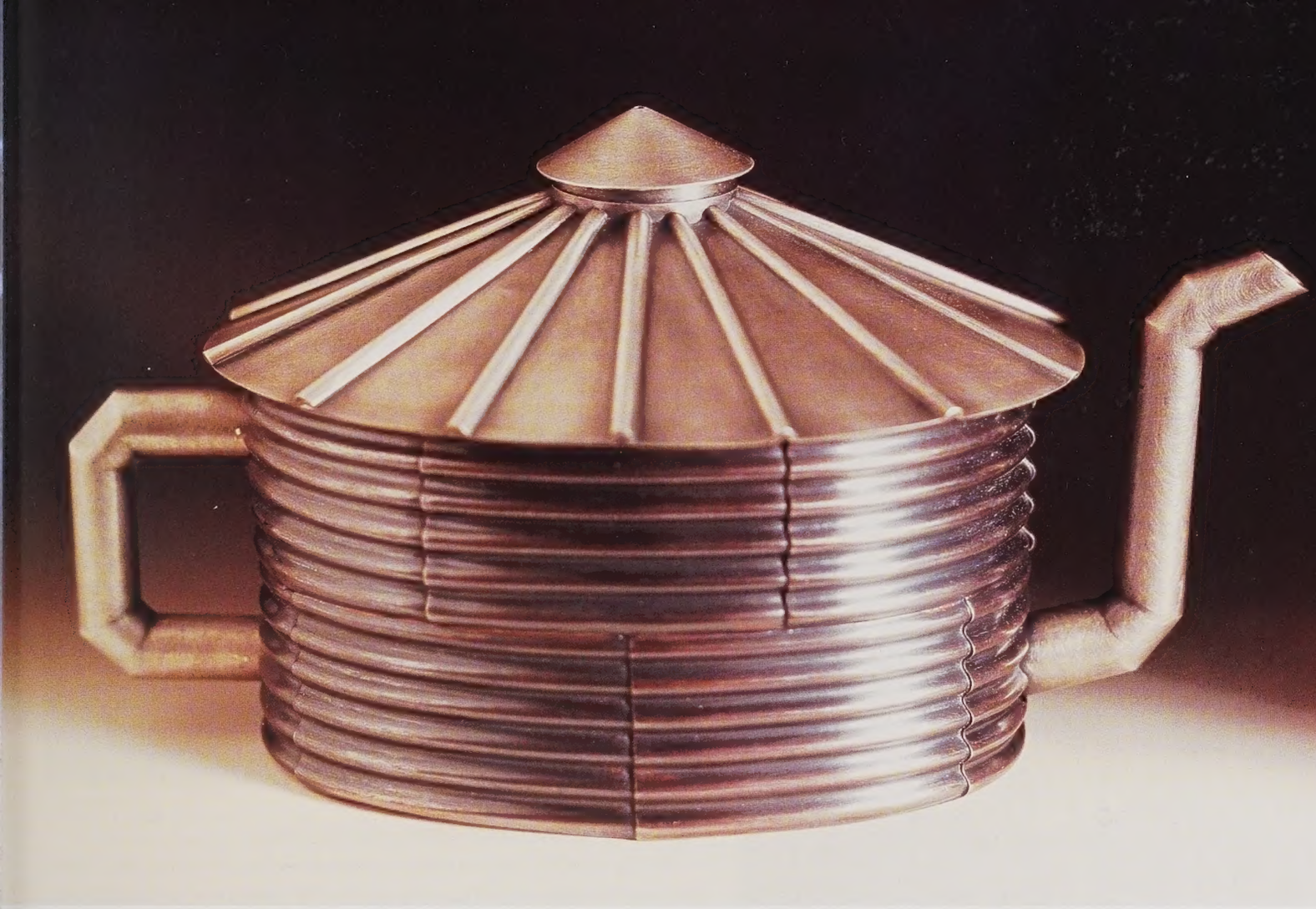
MARILYN DA SILVA PINOLE, CALIFORNIA

Birds have always been among us, or should I say we have been among them. Our watching them is matched only by how they watch us. It makes one think about how many similar characteristics we share. Birds are used as metaphors describing human conditions and daily life in these pieces. Much of my inspiration is based on my fondness for birds (four canaries grace our home), my observation of birds and of people. The hand and bird shadows reflect games we played as children, using our hands to make fantasy shadow creatures. They also reflect how the human touch or presence has impacted the delicate balance of our feathered friends.

These sculptures are a combination of metalsmithing techniques and carved wood. The color is primarily colored pencil over gesso. Each bird is life-size. The gestures represent a moment frozen in time.

left
The Emperor's Nightingale, 2000
sterling silver, copper, brass, gold plate, wood, gesso, colored pencil, and found object
6 1/2 x 8 x 10"
Photo: Philip Cohen

below
Story of My Life, Volume III, 2000
copper, sterling silver, brass, bronze, wood, gesso, colored pencil
8 1/2 x 15 x 10"
Photo: Lee Fatheree



ROBIN KRAFT LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

Shifting scale from jewelry to teapots was a challenge that came as the result of an invitation to make my first teapot. I enjoyed the challenge, and it led to more teapots. Inspired by a wide range of sources—from a sense of place (*Indiana Archetype*, and *Throat Soother's* teapot) to books (*Fictionary*)—these objects are eclectic. I viewed them as an opportunity to break out of my mold a bit, to do something different from my jewelry. But, of course, the essence is still there.

above
Indiana Archetype, 1998
sterling silver
5 1/2 x 8 1/2 x 5"

left
Fictionary, 1999
sterling silver
7 x 6 x 5"

RICHARD MAWDSLEY CARBONDALE, ILLINOIS

My life in the Midwest is a primary source of inspiration. For the last decade, my work has been inspired by water towers. The water tower protrudes from a clump of trees that marks the presence of small towns in the austere mid-American prairie. Often the tallest structure in town, at one time it represented a significant civic achievement, becoming a town monument. It is the ultimate metal vessel in capacity and scale, and its visual dominance makes it a focal point in most settings. Through the connecting pipes, it is the heart of the system that binds a town together. Today it has been forgotten and eclipsed by other civic achievements, but the tower's prime function, creating pressure, continues. This conflict between imposing monumentality and anonymous position within the community is what I find fascinating and creatively stimulating. The water tower opened an exciting avenue for personal expression for me, and its mechanical, industrial, and architectural nature fits well with my technical interests.

The imagery in the current work depicts small-town objects that had an impact on me. Sounding devices like whistles and bells that break the calm in dramatic fashion and are audible markers of a small town. Air-raid sirens and their blasts were the definitive symbol of the nuclear bomb hysteria of my youth. They were also used to warn of the approach of one of nature's most violent and feared phenomenons: the tornado. Street lights that pierce the darkness of a rural setting with eerie, isolated light are emphasized in this work. Also depicted are castoffs typical of rural settings, and trash that surrounds water towers I have seen in metropolitan areas. Small towns keep the base of the water tower clean and covered with well-cared-for grass. My intention is to create a visual dialogue that contrasts urban and rural America.

above
Goblets, from Water Tower Series, 1997
sterling silver
height 9 1/2"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Rush Luangsuwan

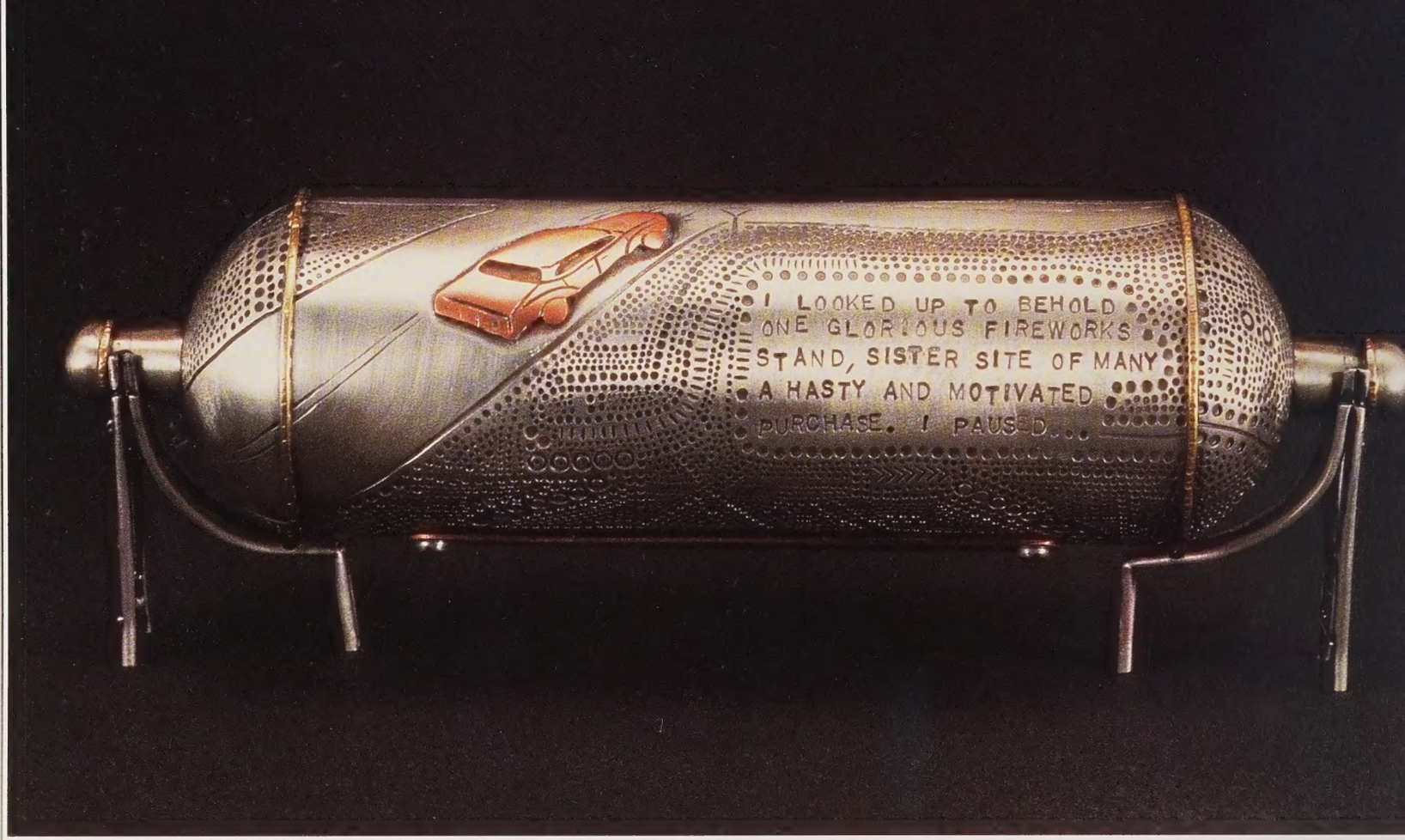
left
Alpha-Omega: Water Tower #5, 1999
sterling silver, gold plate, rhodium plate, pearls, mahogany
23 x 11 x 11"
Collection Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas

ROBLY A. GLOVER LUBBOCK, TEXAS

I hope these vessels serve as contemporary archetypes recalling metaphorical, historical, and cultural references to nature, humans, and animals. The melding of male-female and plant-animal are paramount to my visual palette. I am obsessed by the underlying importance of fertility and its timeless associations with ancient cultures and visual arts. These objects and images continue to hold their power and act as reminders to our culture of the elemental forces that affect us all. The postmodern bombardment of images and information from all cultures and times reveals the universal threads of human existence. My investigation of these transformations and the interplay of these plant, human, and animal references to fertility and their ceremonial use are influences that I find ceaselessly compelling. I distill these visual references into forms that serve as contemporary icons that celebrate the original metaphor of the vessel. Although they pour and serve, function is subordinate to their contemplative and ceremonial function.

right
Venus Pitcher, 1998
sterling silver
8 1/2 x 6 x 2 1/2"

below
Delta Tea Server, 1998
sterling silver, ebonized wood
7 1/2 x 8 1/2 x 3"



SUZANNE PUGH PENLAND, NORTH CAROLINA

The focus of my work is functional containers that relay accessible personal narratives: stories of fear, love, volatility, frustration, etc. The intricate surfaces invite the viewer to engage with the container, read it, study it, play with it, become obsessed with it, and ultimately use it.

My ideas are obliquely derived from the costumes of early country and western singers, vintage flashlights, neon signs, other containers, Vic Chestnutt, Linda Barry, bluegrass music, and the giants on whose shoulders I tentatively kneel.

above
Junior Brown's One and Only, 1998
sterling silver, copper, 18k gold, steel screws
9 x 2 x 2"

left
Enough, 2000
fine silver, sterling silver, concrete, pearl
10 x 3 1/2 x 3/4"

ANDREW S. MACDONALD DESOTO, ILLINOIS

Looking at machinery components and industrial images from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has inspired my current work. In particular, Cornish pumping engines, boilers, valves, and calorifics. Their sense of beauty and solid construction are qualities that influence me. Minimal in design but complex in structure and fabrication, these machines were built to stand the test of time. Attention to detail and use of architectural elements made the machines aesthetically pleasing, as well as giving structural integrity and strength to the form.

Though imposing my own design and technical vocabulary on the form, my overall objective while working on these pieces is to try to capture the spirit and simple nature of the machine.

left
Smokestack #3, 1999
steel
29 x 7 x 7"
Photo: Jeffery Bruce

below
Pumping Unit, 1999
steel
11 x 7 x 3"
Photo: Jeffery Bruce

DANIEL WROBLEWSKI DETROIT, MICHIGAN

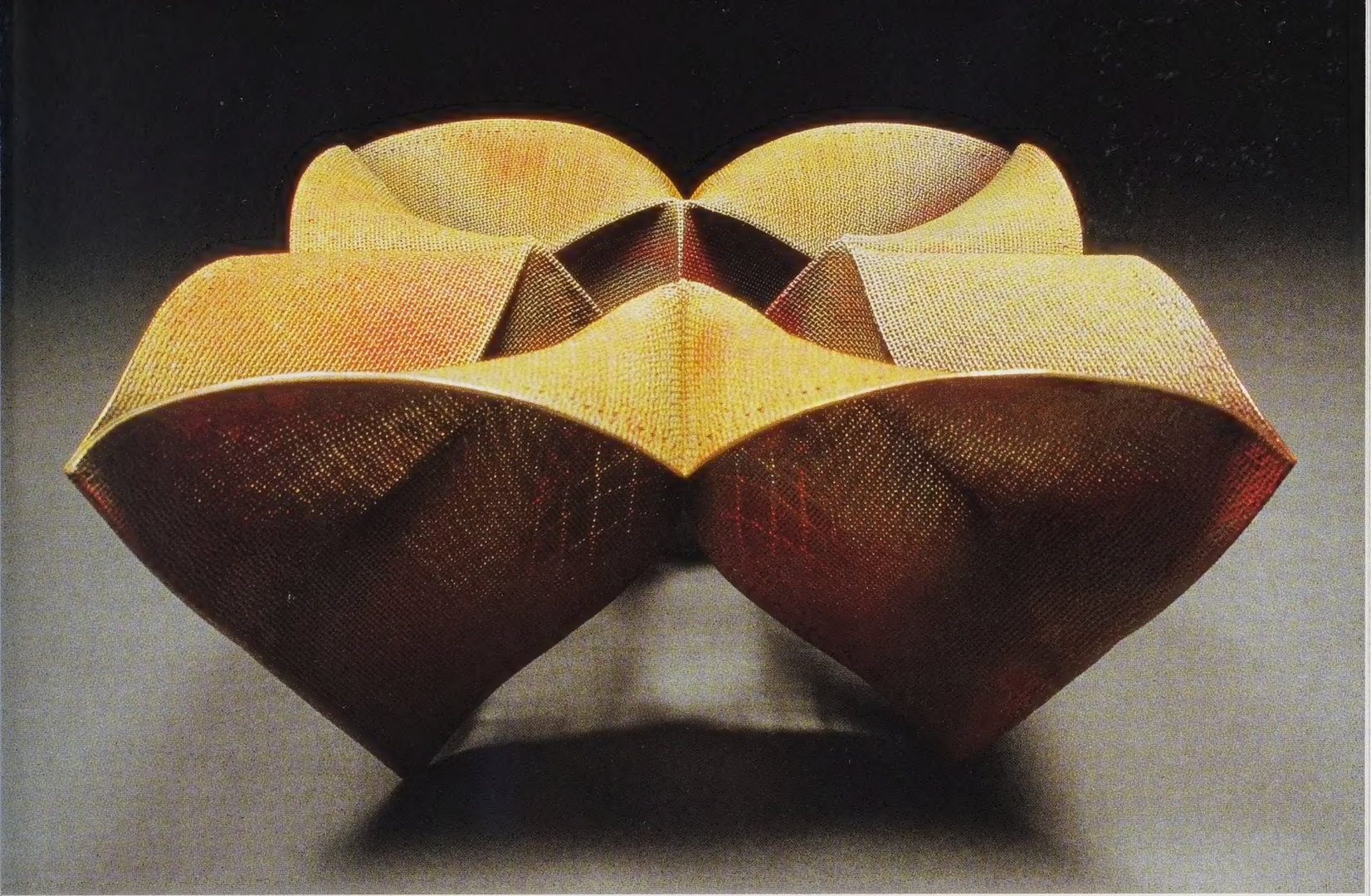
While a police diver, I recovered more bodies than I currently have students in a classroom.

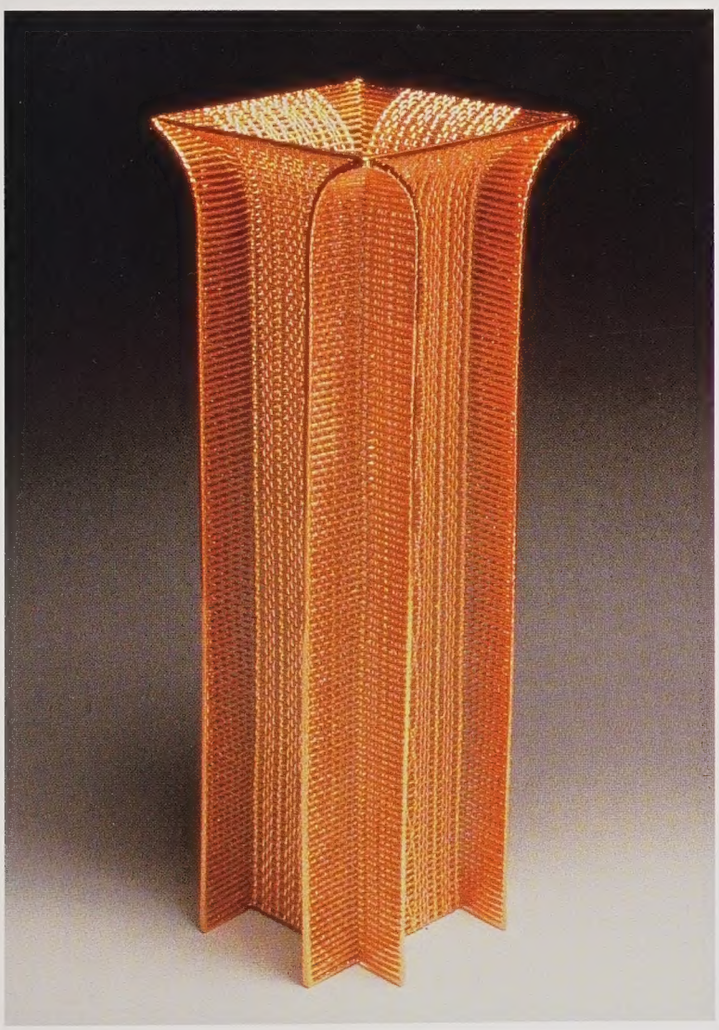
I have drawn upon my past to create something that would allow me to step away from the lingering thoughts, sights and smells of death. My first piece, *B/M/13*, represents the pristine body of a young boy I recovered from the Detroit River.

The second, *New Year's Reveler*, is thematically similar. The cup is larger to represent an adult. It is also much more ornate to represent the finery of a New Year's Eve reveler who drowned in the river.

left
B/M/13, 1998
copper, died copper, silver
7 x 9 x 9"

right
New Year's Reveler, 1999
silver-plated copper, silver, bezel-set garnets
8 x 11 x 11"





DENNIS R. NAHABETIAN GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA

The underlying structure of my vessels are derived from personal interpretations of architecture, music, and the visual order of nature.

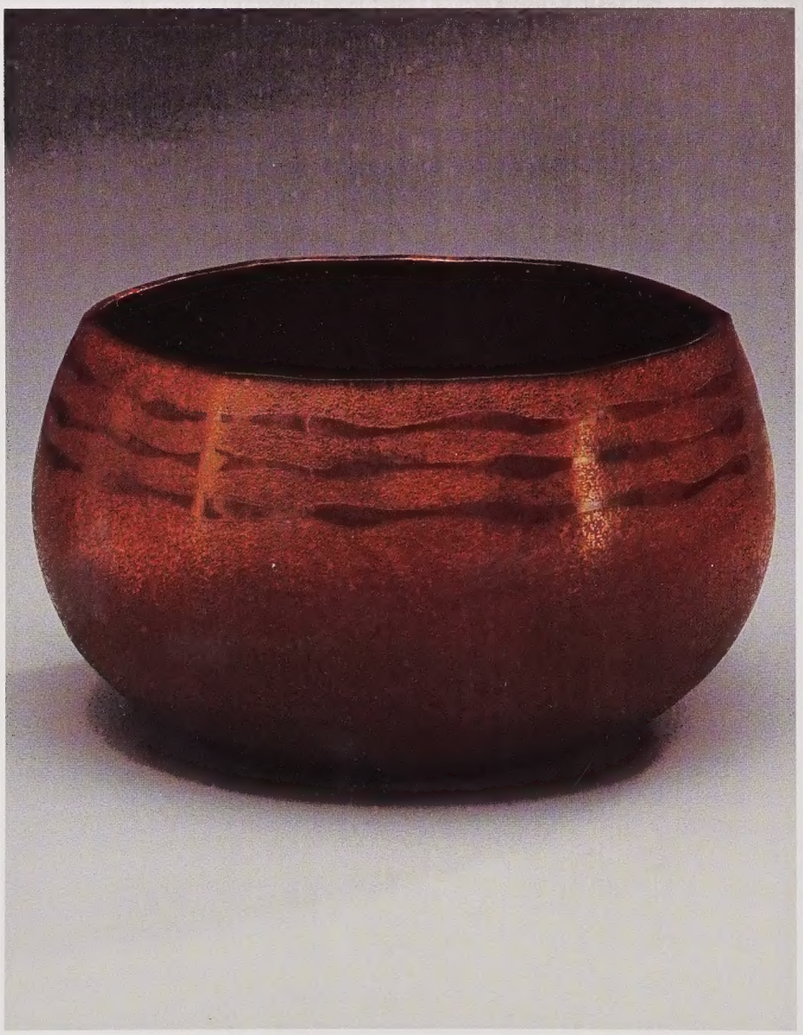
The aesthetics I have employed in this body of work are informed by textiles, Chinese basketry, and the human form.

Through a combination of metalworking and textile techniques, I've developed an unusual hybrid of characteristically supple and rigid mediums.

Ultimately, my goal is to create objects that are contemplative as well as functional.

above
Amber Waves of Grain, 2000
patinaed copper
4 x 6 x 6"

left
Aria, 1998
gilded copper
9 x 3 x 3"



TOM ODELL CHATHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

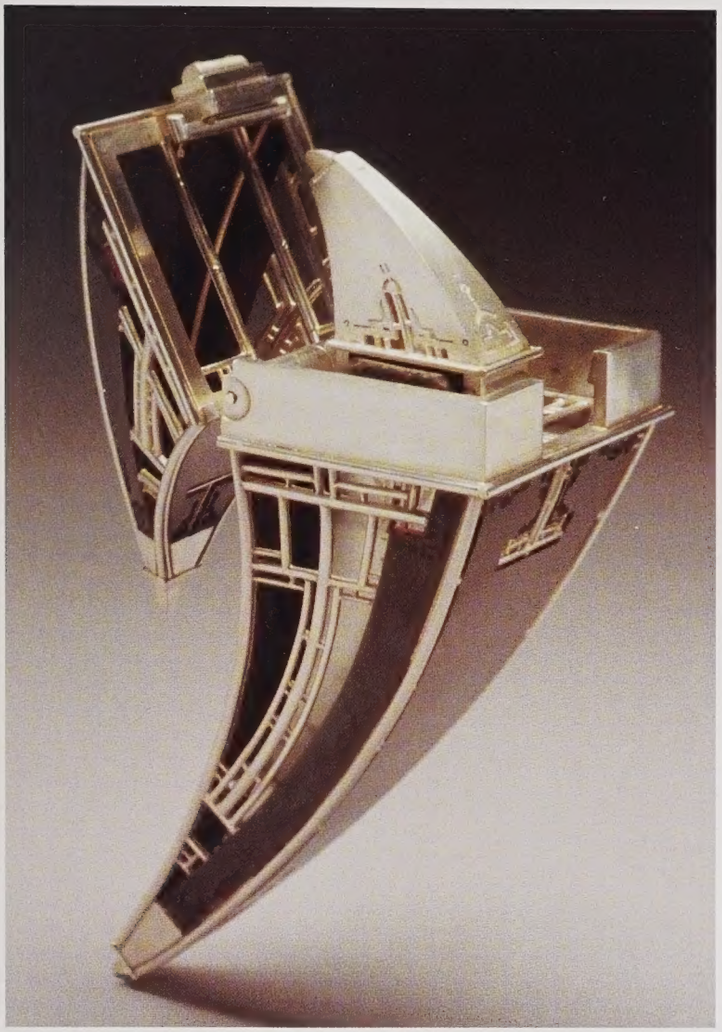
A major influence in my work has been traditional Japanese metalwork.

My pieces are not statements, they are compositions with the abstract qualities of harmony, rhythm, and dynamic balance expressed and integrated using the sculptural elements of three-dimensional form, texture, and color.

Inspiration for my work comes from emphasizing the qualities of the metals I use, i.e., color, luster, hardness, and malleability and extending the potential of these properties with the techniques of metalworking for more than merely mechanical purposes. An important principle in my work is the commitment to working with many different metals and alloys for their different color values used either singly or in combinations and particularly when patinated with various processes. As I have become familiar with the qualities of these alloys and sensitive to the properties of each, I often find it is these properties that, in a very real sense, "shape" the work.

above
Kensui Bowl, 1996
kuromido, silver alloy inlay, rokusho patina
3 3/4 x 6 x 6"
Photo: Dean Powell

left
Kensui Bowl, 1996
brass, rokusho patina
3 1/2 x 6 1/4 x 6 1/4"
Photo: Dean Powell



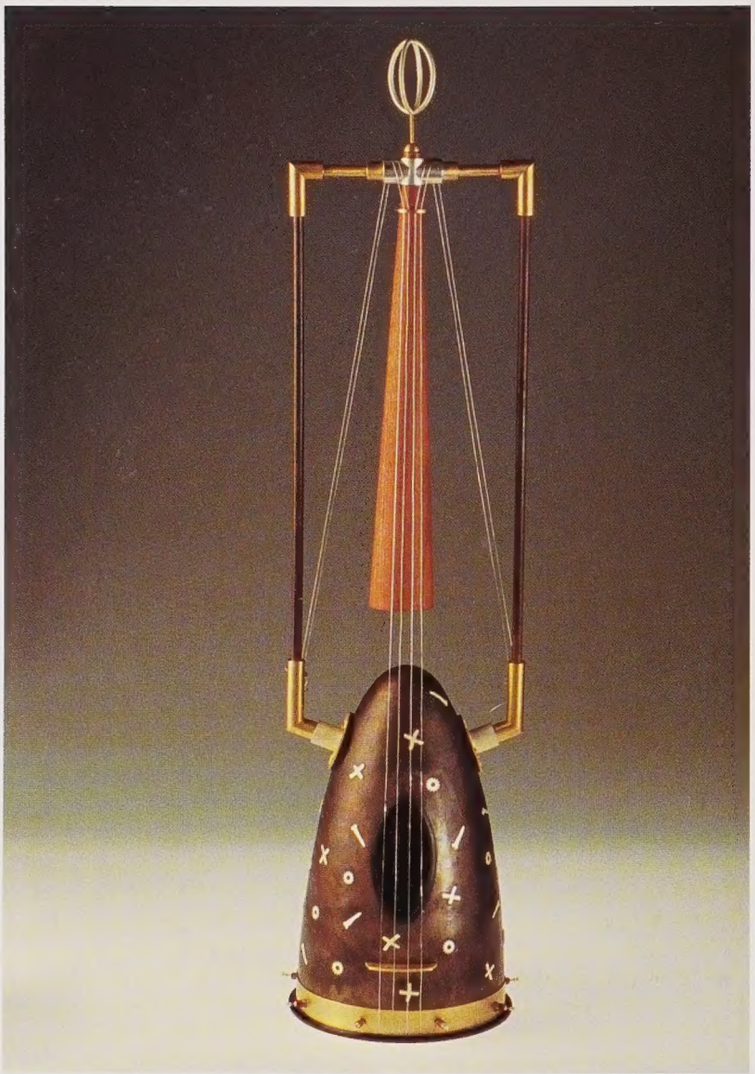
CAPPY COUNARD WOLF EDINBORO, PENNSYLVANIA

Encased. Contained. Opening.

This series of sculptural containers are about holding, protecting, and the act of discovery. They are visually influenced by elements of architecture, such as the forms found in an agricultural landscape: silos, barns, and grain elevators or the sense of space and interconnecting parts of traditional Japanese temples and shrines. A clasp or a spring-loaded mechanism becomes the key to unlock the many puzzlelike layers of containment within each piece. Held beneath strata of intricate metalwork, at the core of the piece, the viewer will reveal simple clay beads sculpted by hands a half century ago. With their unadorned beauty and connection to the earth, these objects allude to that which is intrinsic to life: essential, pure and intuitive.

left
Opening, 1999
14k gold, sterling silver, kuromi-do, clay bead
5 x 1 5/8 x 3"

below
Contained, 1999
sterling silver, clay bead
2 1/4 x 2 1/4 x 2 1/4"

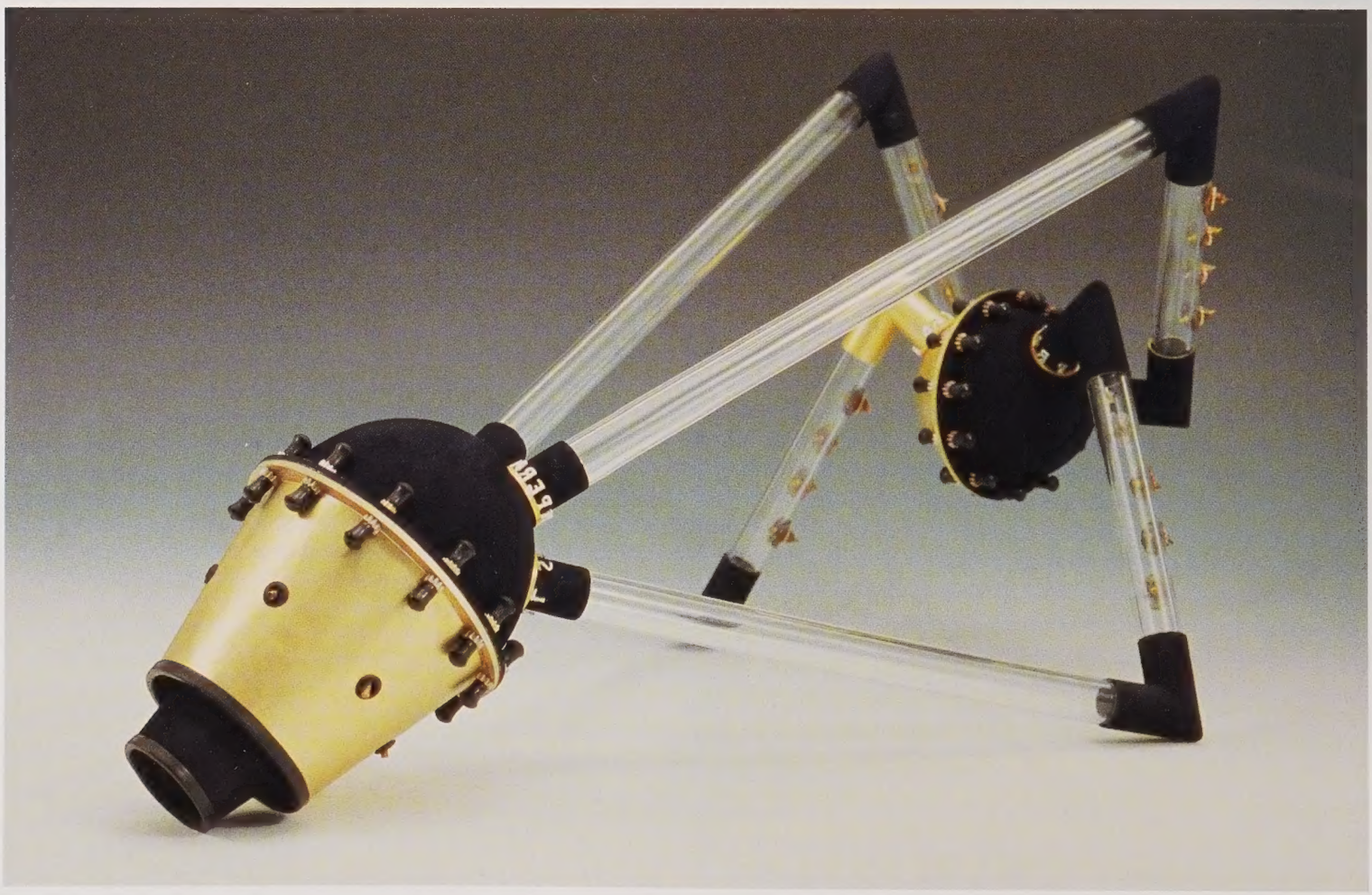


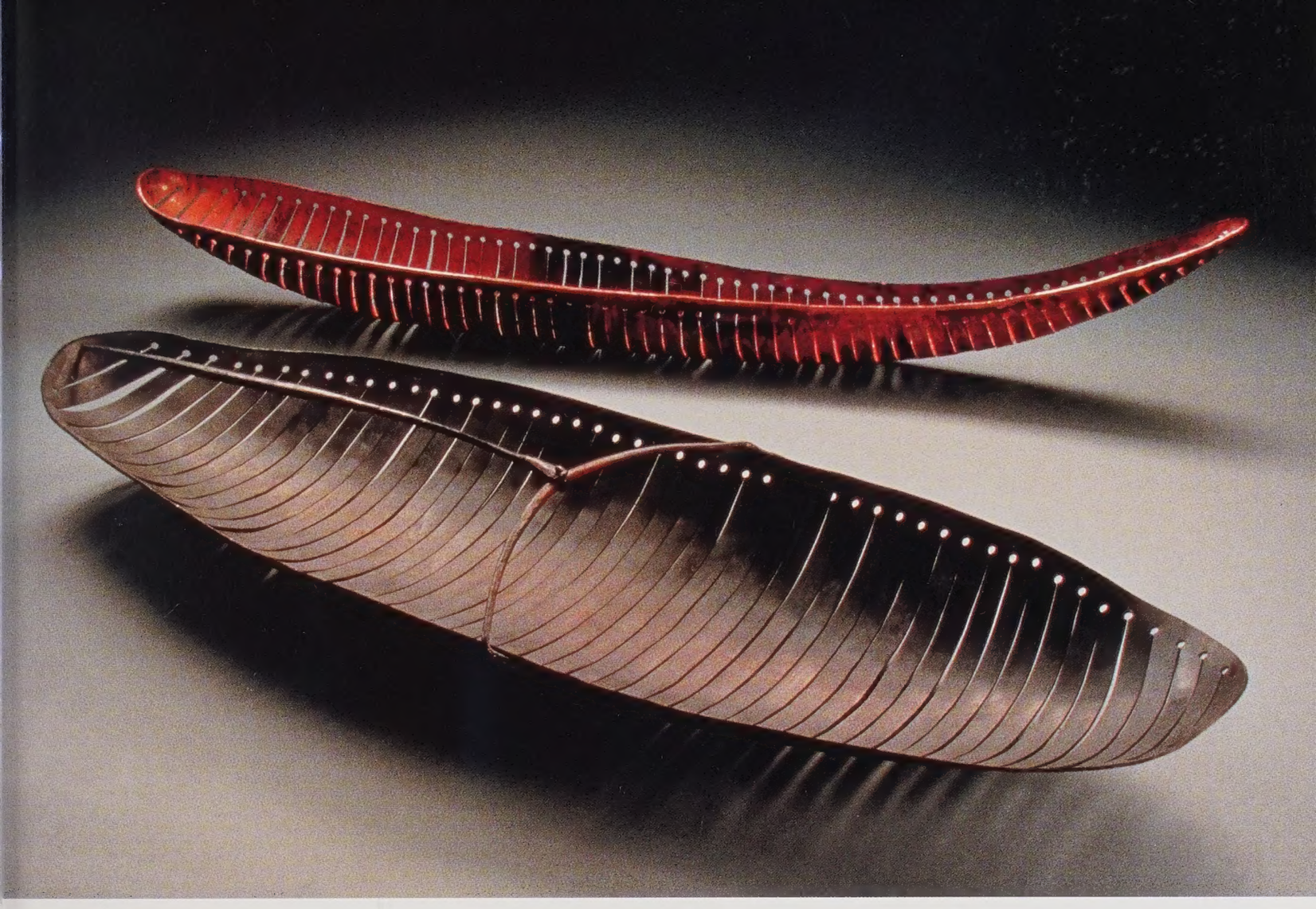
EVAN H. LARSON DETROIT, MICHIGAN

These devices explore human truths. Operations of thought, mourning, and communication are both replicated and sublimated by means of mechanical imagery. As machine displaced craft and subsequently saw a diminished role for itself, ironically, both craftsmen and machinists struggled to preserve their traditions. My works become commentaries on the rupture between the role of inventor and maker in metalsmithing history and seek to recapture a spirit of experimentation. These objects explore the metalsmith's historic role as creator, inventor of tools, apparatus, machines, and, on occasion, those objects which surpass their expected functions, to serve a humanistic purpose. I have tried to bind up basic human characteristics (mourning, love, thought), into my part hand-crafted and part machine-crafted devices. Here, utility becomes unconventional (tool of thought, mandala, demonstrative device). These human truths, once driven by ephemera, can transcend time and become concrete objects.

left
Will-o'-the-Wisp, 1995
brass, silver, walnut, rubber, circuit-board screws
34 x 8 1/2 x 8 1/2"
Photo: Linda Kemple

below
Nocturne, 1997
brass, silver, rubber, acrylic, valve stems
26 x 14 x 13"
Photo: Mary L. Gray





LEONARD URSO SCOTTSVILLE, NEW YORK

My sculpture reflects the stories, myths, and characters that mirror some small part of the human condition. As an artist, I have come to appreciate the unique characteristics of materials. I have learned the subtleties of the hands—their ability to shape material and to direct the movements of a tool. Sheet metal is treated like a sheet of paper and a hammer like a pencil, resulting in a sculpture that's rendered as if it were a drawing in the round. I make use of this knowledge in order to more easily respond to creative ideas with a greater sense of clarity. In the end, this reflection on the value of things comes together in a symbolic order, forming the language that embodies my art.

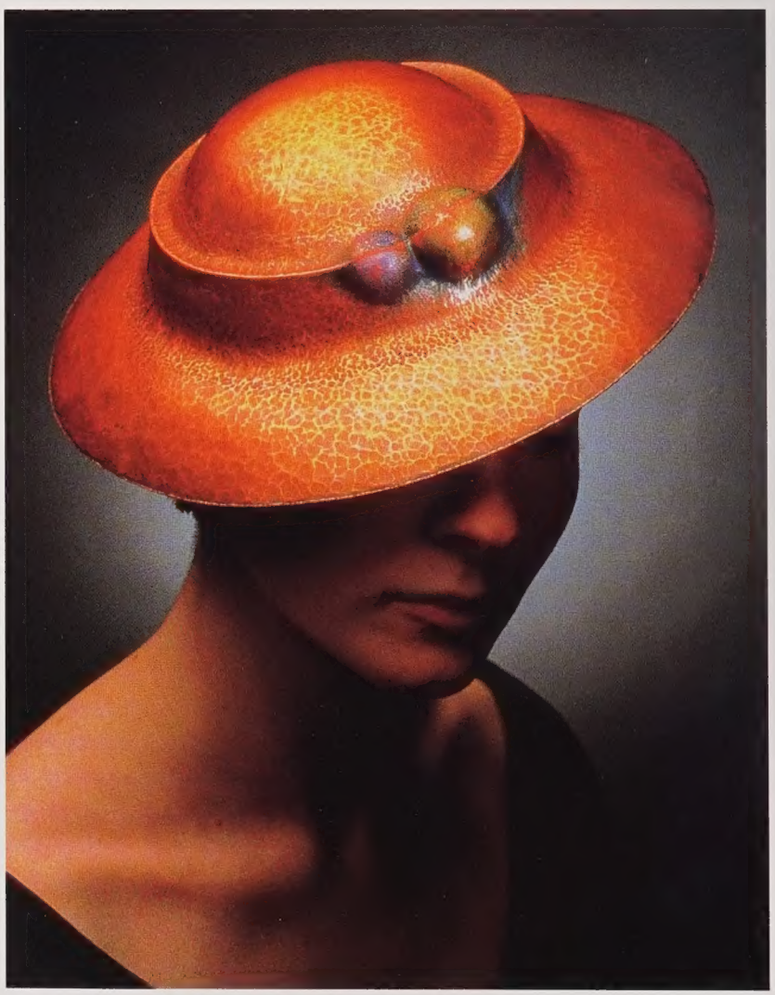
above
Vessels, 2000
copper
length 6'
Photo: Bruce Miller

left
Victims, 1999
copper
length 4'
Photo: Bruce Miller

FELICIA SZORAD PENLAND, NORTH CAROLINA

My metal works reveal personal content supported and defined by a practiced use of artistic principles, metalsmithing techniques, and refined craftsmanship. My ideas about being female compose the conceptual theme of my work

My feminine perspective is one of juxtaposition and duality. Women possess seemingly contrasting qualities: strength and delicacy, self-reliance and nurturance. Similarly, female existence is a balance of positive and negative realities: childbirth and domestic violence, economic freedom and rape. Not unlike my feminine perspective, my metal work embodies juxtaposition and duality. For example, my hats are subtly detailed, pretty garments that entice wearability. Yet they are also strong, work-hardened helmets that feel slightly heavy and uncomfortable when worn. I often punctuate the conceptual theme of my work by referencing the female form and by juxtaposing contrasting materials, textures, colors, or finishes.



above
Pure, 2000
copper, prismacolor
5 x 15 1/2 x 15 1/2"
Photo: Ken Yanoviak

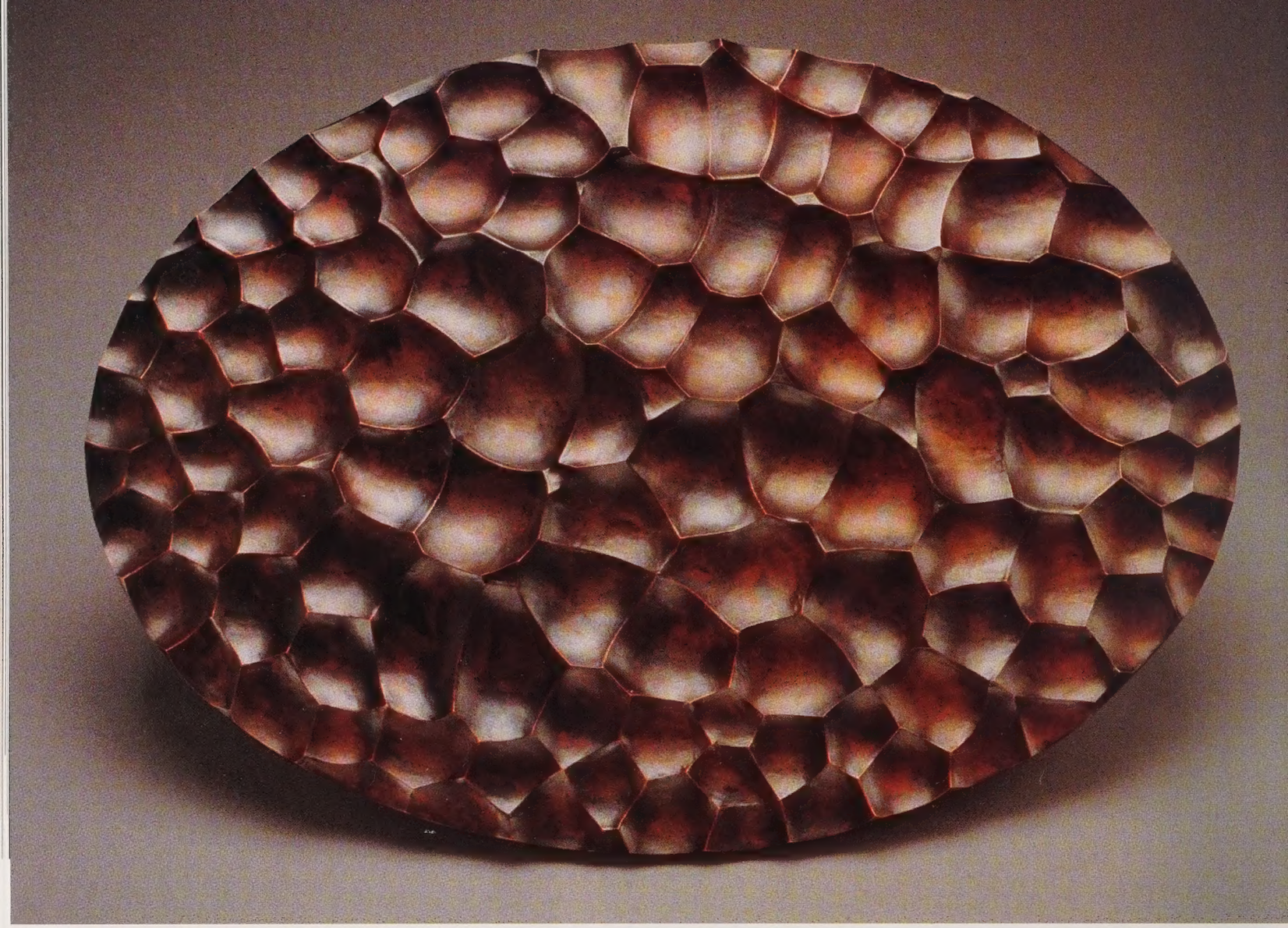
right
Groweth, 2000
copper, prismacolor
4 x 10 1/2 x 10 1/2"
Photo: Ken Yanoviak

MIEL MARGARITA PAREDES OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

The simplest definition of a helmet is a "protective covering of the head." Protection is required in moments of conflict or potential violence. Helmets are designed specifically to protect the brain, the organ that controls thought and coordination. The word "brain" is synonymous with "intelligence." Phrenology, once believed a serious science, is now rated with the symbols of the Zodiac. *Lengua*, translated from Spanish, means "tongue"; specifically, cow tongue, commonly served among people of Hispanic descent. *Lengua* also means "language." Thanks are given from one person to another when one is "pleased" with another's actions. There are often questionable motives behind said actions and thanks.

left
Lengua (helmet), 2000
copper, ceramic, mixed media
17 x 9 x 18"
Photo: Stephen Funk

below
Thank You (helmet), 1999
copper, brass, mixed media, ceramic vase
24 x 14 x 15"
Photo: Stephen Funk

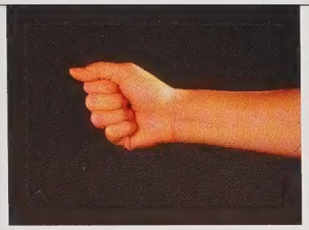


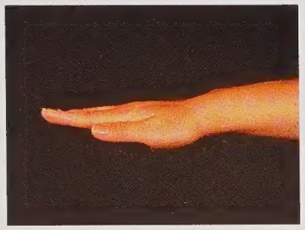
MYRA MIMLITSCH-GRAY STONE RIDGE, NEW YORK

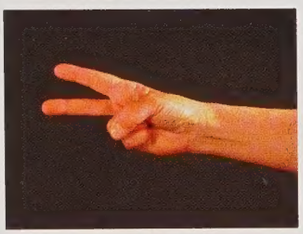
Presentation objects such as *Food Plinth* and *Footed Oval Server* have evolved in tandem with a series of functional cups and pitchers, in which utility is the vehicle for ideas about craft and form. Their design is based on reconstructions of magnified, hammered metal surfaces. The work represents my recent reflections on arts-and-crafts ideology. I am interested in the signification of the handwrought as propaganda and seduction. A quality planished surface is realized through rhythmic repetition, almost hypnotic in its execution. I am engaged in an analytic construction of this rhythm.

above
Footed Oval Server, 2000
copper
28 x 21 x 8"
Photo: Robert Storm

left
Cup with Oval, 1998
sterling silver
5 x 4 x 3"
Photo: Robert Storm







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Jung—Gyu Yi, brooch, onyx, coral, silver, 1999

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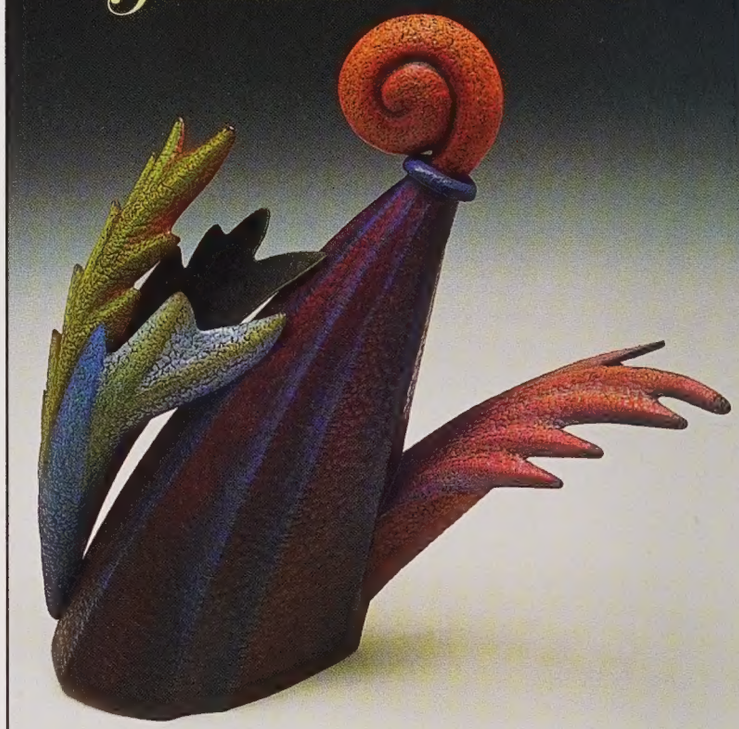

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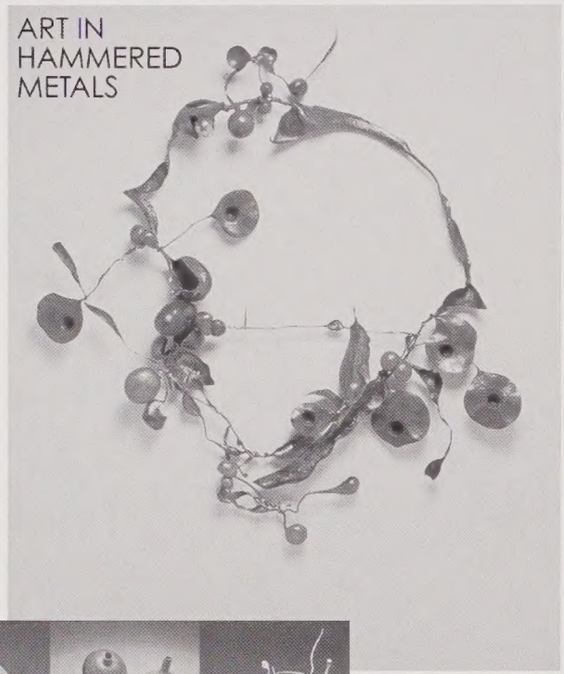

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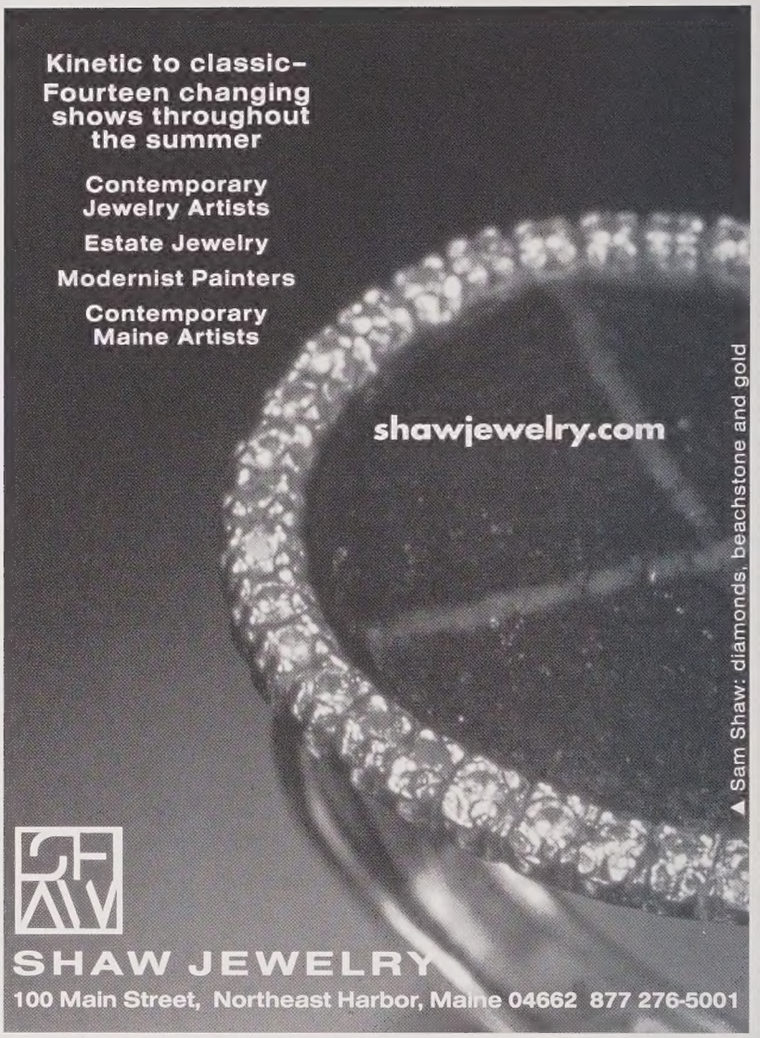

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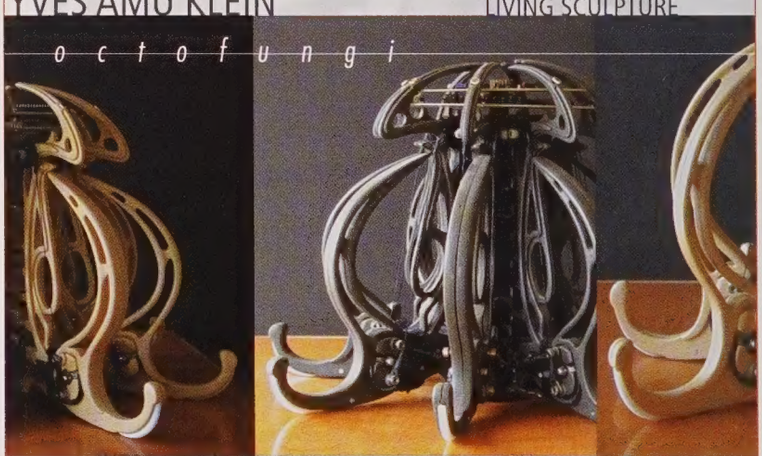

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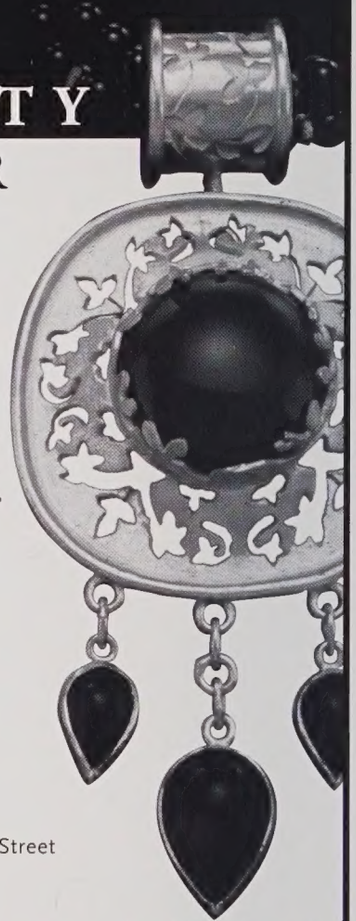
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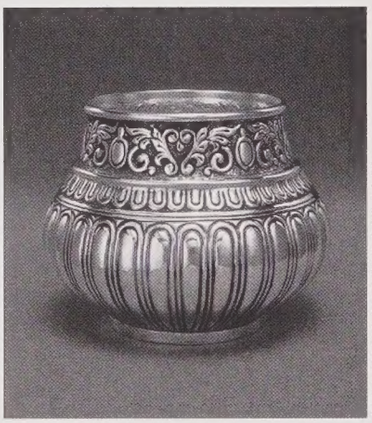

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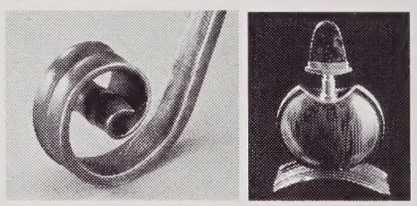

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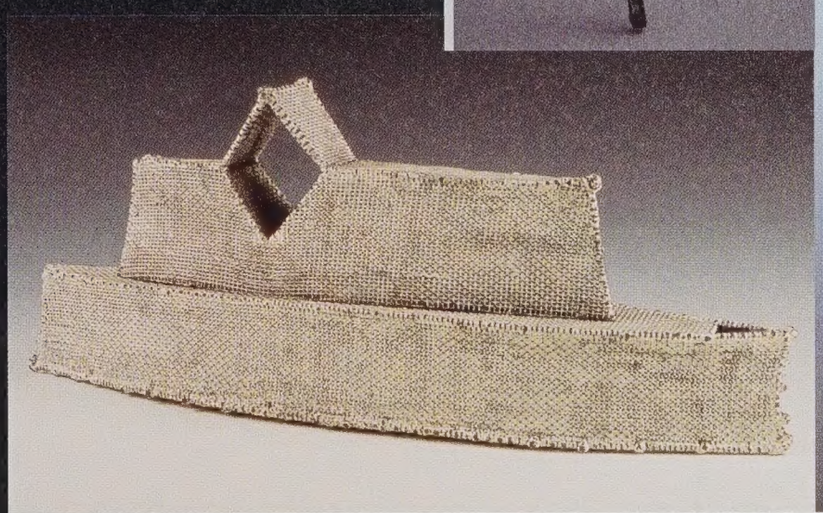

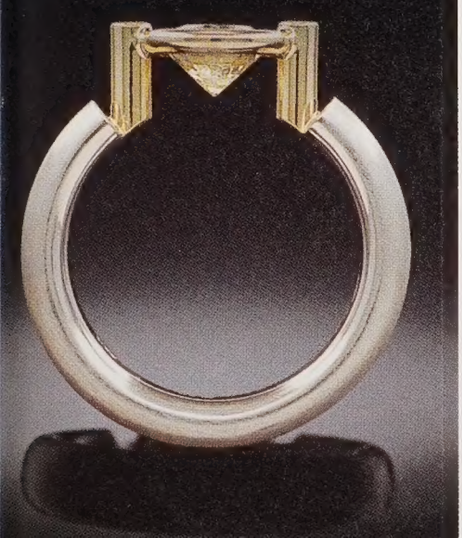

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opposite page, clockwise from top

Chris Y. Smith
Balance Is Too Strenuous (brooch)
silver
4 1/2 x 5 x 1"

Biba Schutz
Circum Pendant, 1996
oxidized bronze and copper, sterling, fine silver
4 1/3 x 1 1/3 x 1 1/3"

(*Metalsmith* Magazine)
Eun-Mee Chung
Passion (brooch), 1999
18k, sterling, diamond, paper
5 x 1 1/2 x 1 1/2"

Billie Jean Theide
Butte #EF-8 (teapot), 1997
bronze, electroformed copper, enamel, patina
4 1/4 x 10 x 12 1/2"
photograph by Billie Jean Theide

Whitney Boin
Post Engagement Ring, 1996
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platinum, 18k
photograph by Todd Flashner

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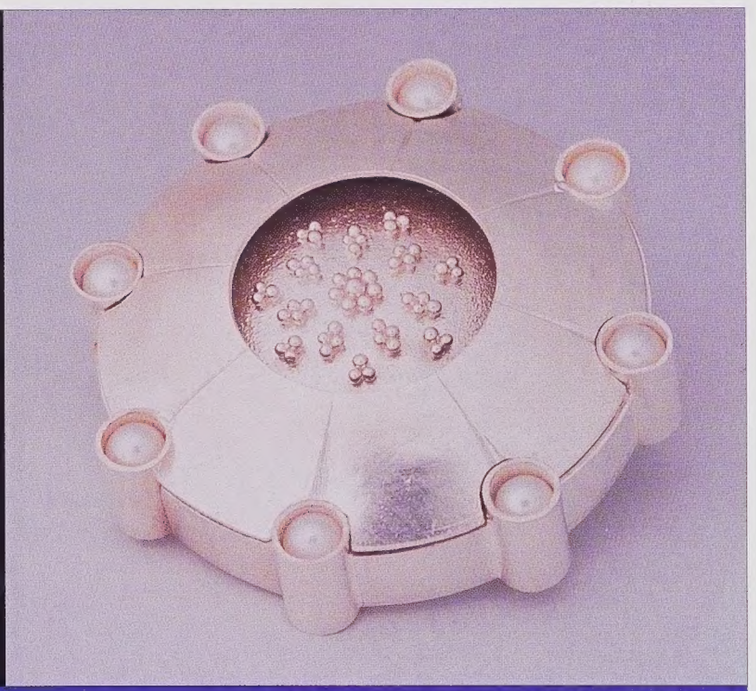

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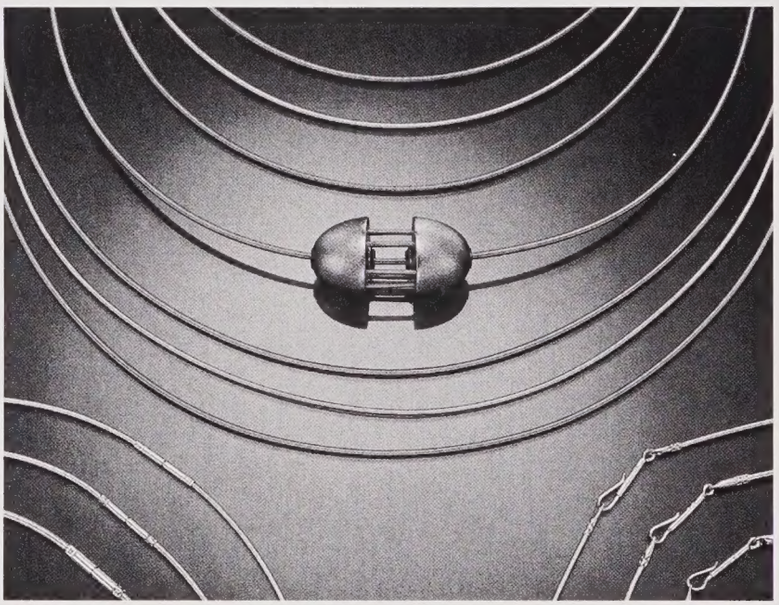

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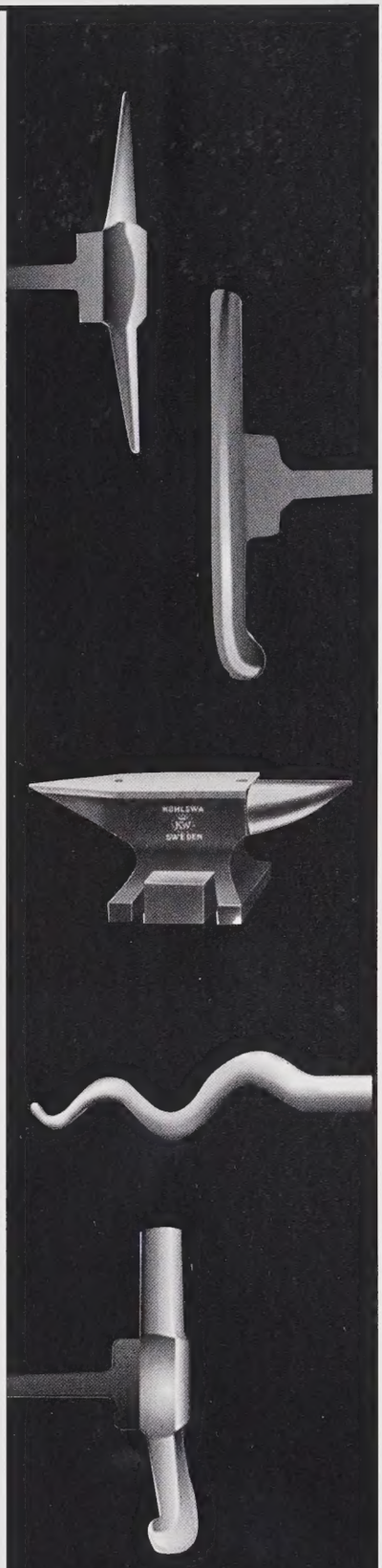

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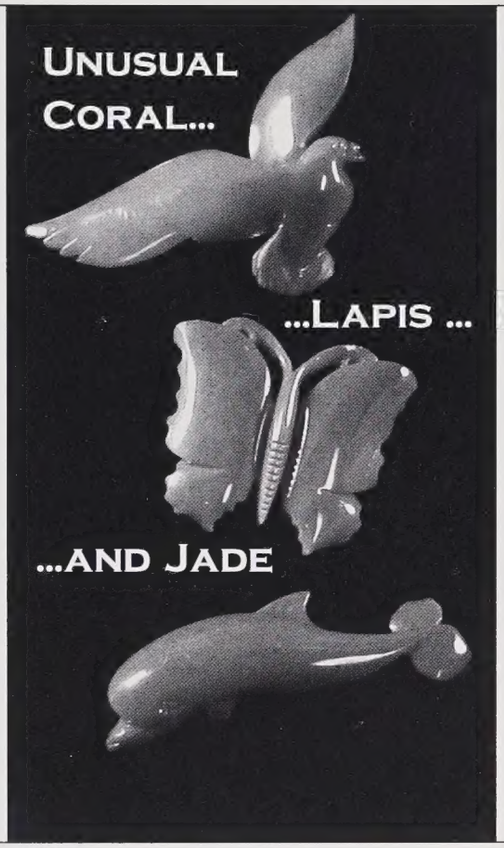

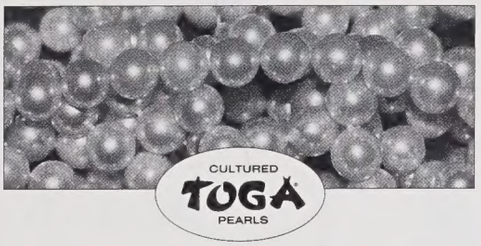

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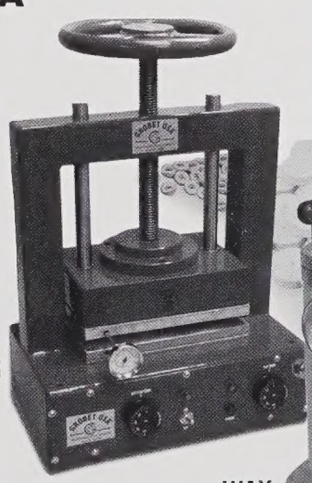

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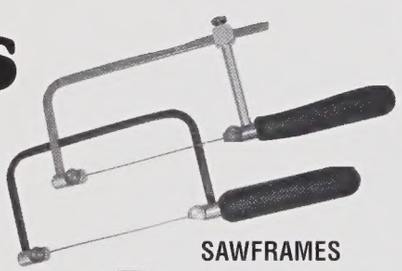

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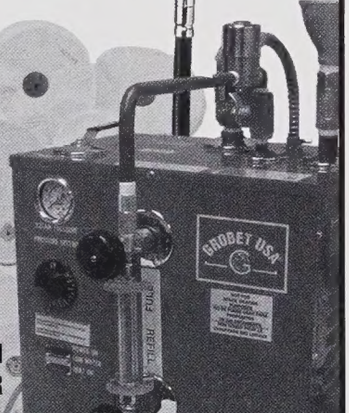

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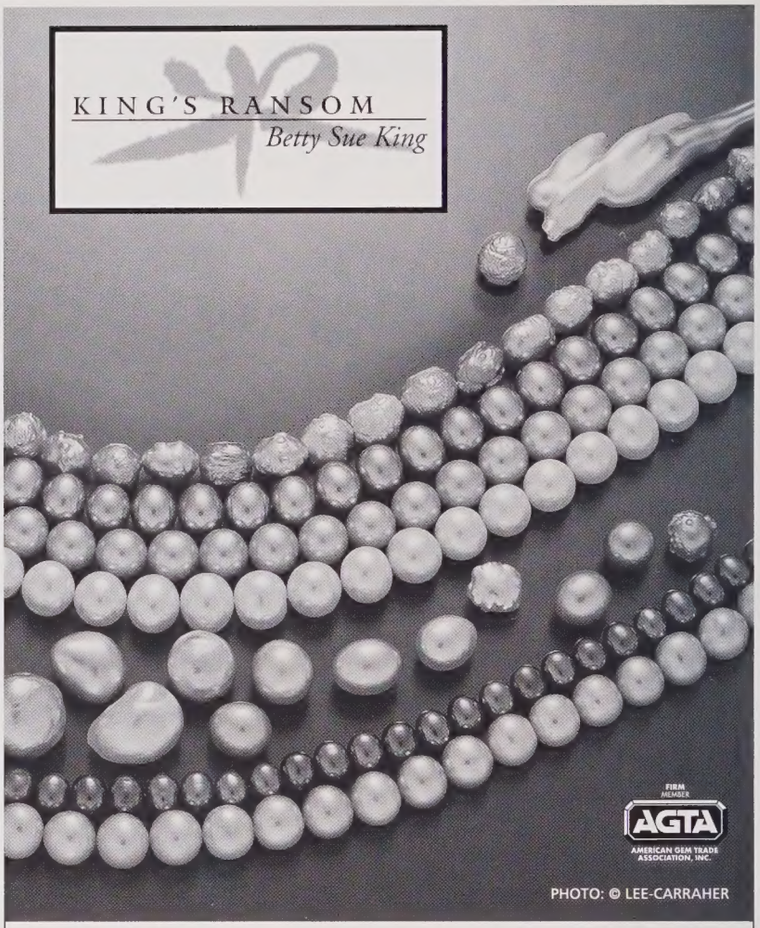

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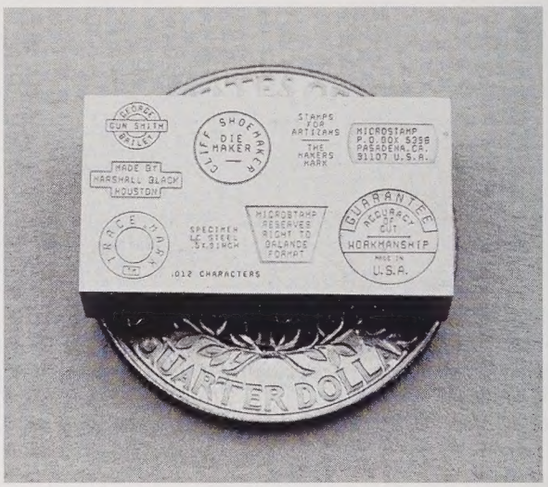

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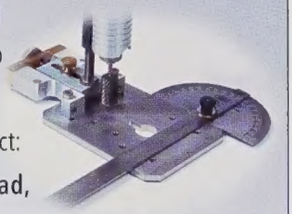

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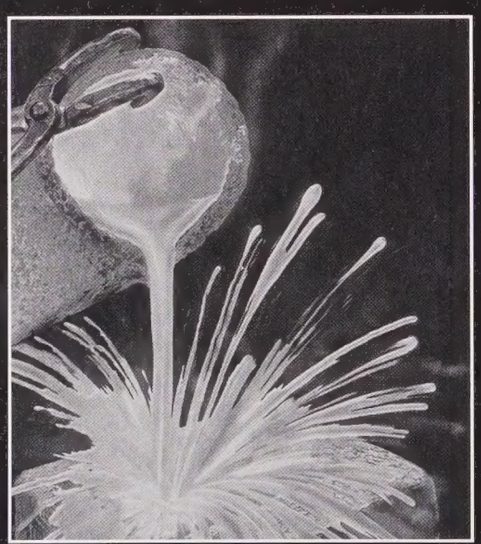

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METALSMITH Index of Advertisers

92nd Street Y 62
Aaron Faber Gallery 56
Allcraft 67
Alpine Casting 66
American Craft Council 63
Appalachian Center for Crafts 64
Art Tech Casting 70
AU Enterprises, Inc. 78
BBC Design Group 69
Bergin Clarke Studio 64
Billanti Casting Company 70
Bonny Doon Engineering 62
Bullhammer Technology 79
Castaldo 80
Charon Kransen Arts 56
Chris's Cables 66
C. Greg Wilbur 58
Eugene McDevitt 72
Fred de Vos Wax Workshops 66
Foredom Electric Company 77
Frei & Borel . . . . . BC
Grobet File Co. 71
Hauser & Miller 74
Hoover & Strong 73
Indian Jewelers Supply Co. 75
Interlaken School of Art 64
Jack da Silva 56
J. Cotter Gallery 58
Jewelry Arts Institute 65
J.P. Stachura Company 75
Kerr Corporation 68
King's Ransom 72
Koka Metalsmiths 75
Larry Paul Casting, Inc. 75
Maurice Goldman & Sons, Inc. 71
Metalliferous 76
Metalwerx . . . . . polybag
Microstamp, Inc. 76
Mobilia Gallery 56
Myron Toback, Inc. 70
Net Motion Marketing 65
Nimba Anvils 74
Obsidian Gallery 60
OXOXO Gallery 58
Patania's 60
Patina Gallery 55
Platau 72
Progress Machine & Tool 68
Reactive Metals Studio 76
Rio Grande . . . . . IBC
Robert Bentley Gemstones 77
Ross Metals 74,76,78
Sarah Graham 59
SAT, Inc. 68
Savannah College of Art & Design . . . 65
Sculpture to Wear 60
Shaw Contemporary Jewelry 58
Sienna Gallery 55
Sierra Pacific Casting 77
SNAG 72, 74
SOFA Chicago 61
Susan Cummins Gallery . . . . . IFC
Susan Hebert Imports (Cobre) 60
Triad 70
Valentin Yotkov 55
Valentin Yotkov Studio 64
Velvet da Vinci 55
Whitney Boin Studio 3
Worcester Center for Crafts 62
Yaw Gallery 57
Zoltan David 5

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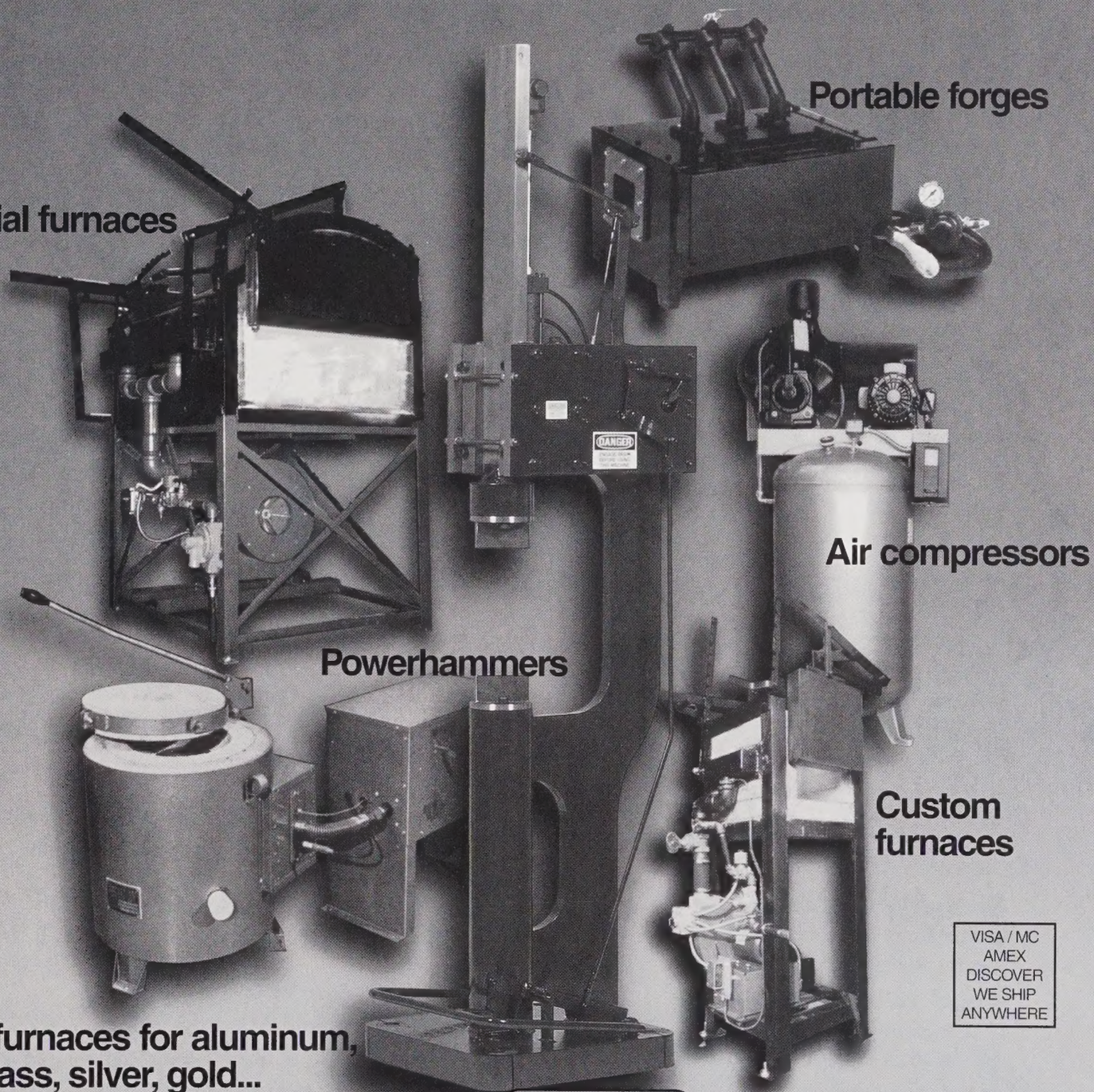

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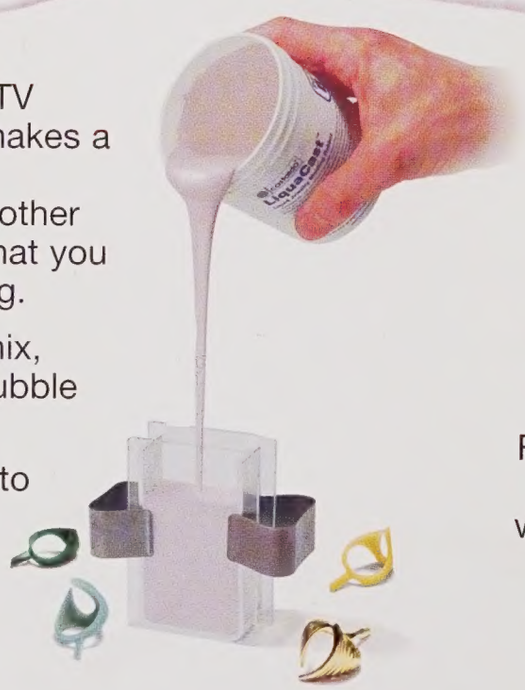

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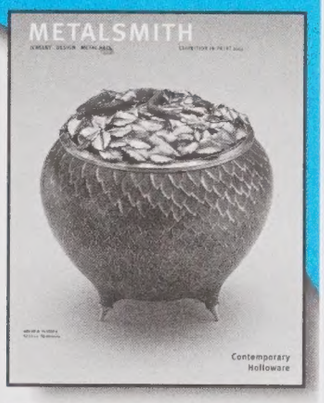

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The John Frei Custom Workbenches

Designed without compromise, these benches are the finest jewelers workbenches available. Built to be beautiful and sturdy, our solid wood workbenches are made in California by expert cabinet makers for jewelers, jewelry schools and jewelry workshops who demand quality tools. Standard features includes: stainless steel lined catch tray, two inch thick butcher block top, locking door with integral bur tray and two concealed security drawers plus six EZglide tool drawers. Available from stock or made to your specifications, in maple or oak. Shipped fully assembled.

Double Bank Custom Workbench
A larger work area with twice as many storage drawers as our standard John Frei workbench. Measures 62" wide by 26" deep and stands 38" tall. Shown in oak.

Bank of Drawers on Casters
These portable storage drawers are made by us to compliment the John Frei custom workbenches. Locking casters makes the bank of drawers easy to move around your shop. Shown in oak.
Measures: 18"W x 26"D x 38"H

John Frei Custom Workbench
Overall dimensions: Standard Design
49"W x 26"D x 38"H

Available Options
Simplified drawer lay outs for schools with individually locking drawers. Pull out layout board above locking door, pull out layout board beneath bench top, left hand bench, locking bank of drawers, custom finish/colors/or nude finish, block different locations, walnut or mahogany benches, GRS benchmate mounted in place of bench pin. Also double bank custom workbench. Contact us for your free full color benches selection guide. Or call for specialized design quote for your studio.

Detail *Four inch square hardened steel anvil block with bench pin, pull out tool tray with cut out for engravers block, two sturdy pull out arm rests, stain steel lined catch tray slides in and out.*

Detail *Locking top door with integral bur tray, two concealed security drawers, raised lip around bench top, two inch thick butcher block top.*

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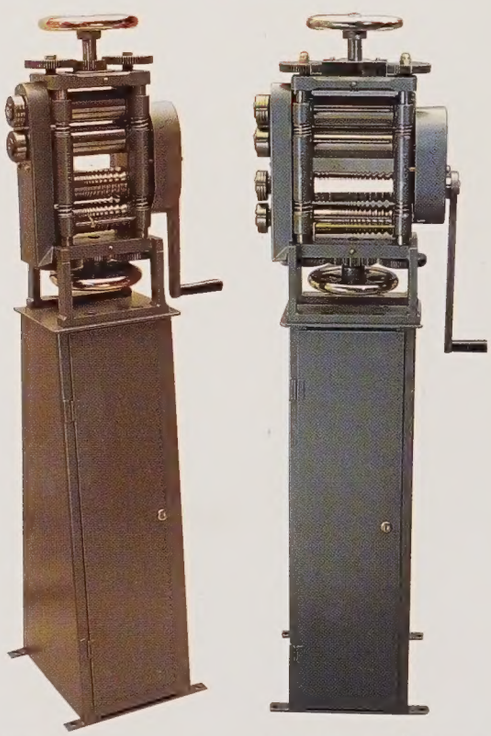

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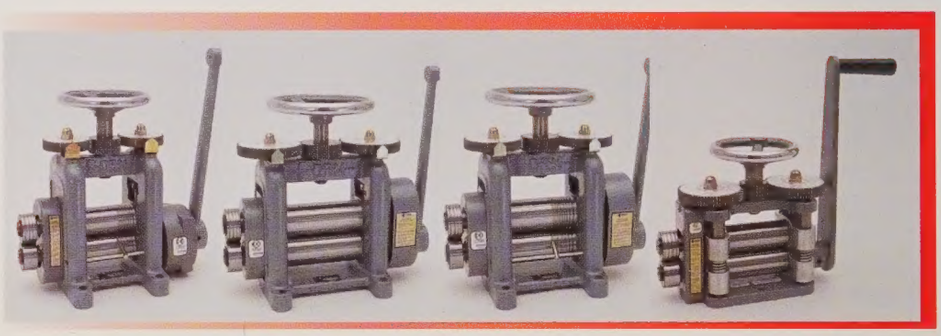

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